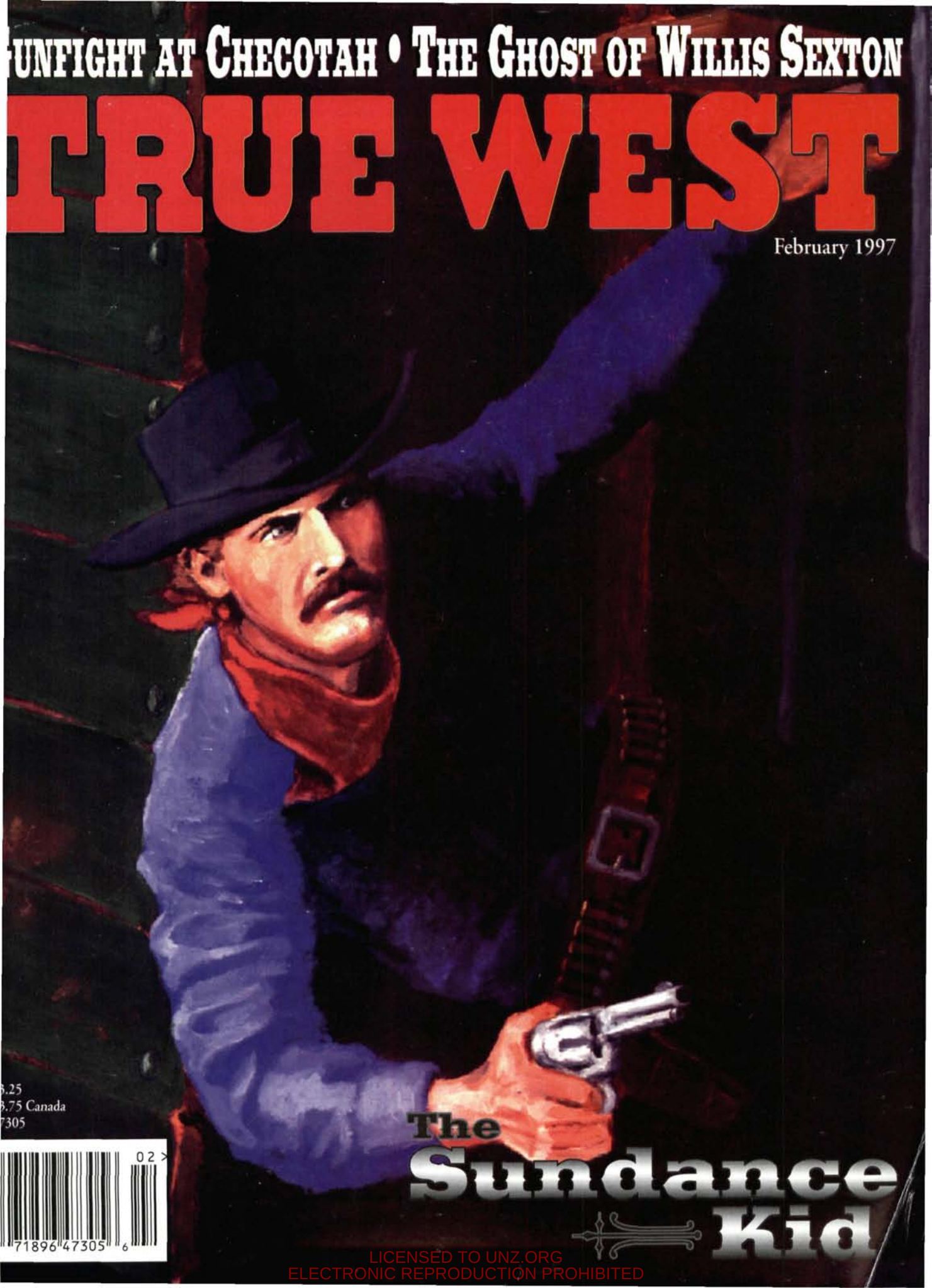
GUNFIGHT AT CHECOTAH • THE GHOST OF WILLIS SEXTON

TRUE WEST

February 1997



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SAM DREBEN: "The Fighting Jew"

By Art Leibson

According to Damon Runyon, "Sam Dreben was the bravest, the gentlest, the courtliest man I ever knew. But beneath the velvet of his demeanor was the iron of a warrior soul. They called him 'The Fighting Jew.'" Nevertheless, no more unlikely hero ever arrived on the American scene. Short, speaking in a guttural voice, he landed in New York at age eighteen broke and looking for a military career. As a stopgap he took a job in an uncle's Philadelphia tailor shop. Within a few weeks he enlisted in the army and was shipped to the Philippines where the U.S. was fighting off an insurrection in the wake of the Spanish-American War. In the Philippine campaign Sam embarked on a military career that included three hitches in the Army, one of which included a tour of duty in China during the Boxer Rebellion. It was in the Philippines, however, that he drew the attention of a man who was to become a good personal friend and admirer, Captain John J. (Black Jack) Pershing.

During one of his enlistments, Sam became a machine gunner, a profession he practiced in a number of Latin American revolutions. As a member of Pancho Villa's celebrated Golden Guards, he was pointed out by Villa as the only American he trusted. But Dreben was also a chief scout for Pershing when he led an expedition into Mexico to capture or kill Villa after the bandido raided Columbus, New Mexico. In all Sam fought under ten different flags.

In El Paso, Texas, Sam made and lost a fortune in mining stocks before joining a local outfit at America's entrance into World War I. Dreben's valorous service in Europe won the Distinguished Service Cross, the Croix de Guerre and the Medaille Militaire. Returning to the United States, Dreben found his family and business badly disrupted but that didn't stop him from seeking high adventure across the Rio Grande in Juarez. Emerging from that conflict slightly infirm, he moved to California. There, while being treated by a physician, Sam received a wrong injection and his wildly challenging life of adventure ended at age forty-six.

This attractive book is designed in 5½ x 8½-inch hard cover format. 208 pp., 12 photos, bibliography and index. Dust cover in color. ISBN 0-87026-098-7. Edition limited to 1,000 copies. **Price $26.95**

DR. GOODFELLOW: Physician to the Gunfighters, Scholar, and Bon Vivant

By Don Chaput

George Goodfellow was a medical professional, not only at home in the primitive operating facilities of Tombstone and Bisbee, but also in lecture halls and prestigious hospitals of San Francisco and Los Angeles. His medical daring-do and accomplishments led to appointments, such as the first Arizona Territorial Health and Quarantine Officer, chief surgeon to the Southern Pacific Railroad, and during the Spanish-American War, in Cuba, he was personal physician to General William Shafter.

For those familiar with Goodfellow's name, "surgeon to the gunfighters" is probably the phrase that first comes to mind. This he was, par excellence, for he performed surgery on dozens of gunshot victims, results of saloon brawls, mining claim affrays, or quarrels between dueling cowboys and townsfolk in Bisbee, Tucson, and Tombstone. He operated successfully on U.S. Deputy Marshal Virgil Earp, but could only watch as Morgan Earp died of gunshot wounds on a Tombstone billiard hall floor.

Goodfellow was always in the middle of action. When a literary society was formed in Tombstone, he was one of the founders. When new mining or ranching properties were being developed, Goodfellow was on hand as a participant or as a surgeon. He was familiar with every gambling hall in Tombstone and Tucson, and not as an onlooker. George drank, gambled, had affairs, and was occasionally involved in fist fights — once in a stabbing.

Although Goodfellow died a relatively young man, he packed into half a century the accomplishments of a half dozen individuals. He had a varied career, and apparently enjoyed life to the fullest.

This beautifully composed book is designed in a 5½ x 8½-inch hard cover format, 228 pp., 22 photos, notes, bibliography and index. Dust cover in color. ISBN 0-87026-097-9. This is Volume 66 in Westernlore's Great West and Indian Series. Edition limited to 1,000 copies. **Price: $26.95**

THE DEVIL HAS FORECLOSED: The Private Journal of George Whitwell Parsons, Volume II The Concluding Arizona Years, 1882-1887

Feb. 1997 publication

Transcribed, edited, annotated, and indexed by Lynn R. Bailey

By 1883 the chronicler of Tombstone's turbulent years, George Whitwell Parsons, was no longer a tenderfoot. He was a knowledgeable mining man, savvy to the rigors and dangers of frontier living. His transition from San Francisco banker to diehard frontiersman is evident in his journals from 1883 until he left Arizona early in 1887. Here, for the first time in published form, is presented Parsons' struggles in Sonora, first trying to establish a quartz mill, then eking out an existence managing a company store in Nacosari, and finally plunging into gold mining in the nearby mountains which bankrupted him and forced his return to Tombstone.

Like Parsons, Tombstone was about to undergo adverse times, and fortunately George was there to record events. A rapid succession of calamities brought economic chaos to the town: mines were flooded, a bank collapsed, newly-installed pumping equipment failed, miners struck, and the price of silver fell forcing a shutdown of mining. If that was not enough, burning of the Grand Central hoist brought Tombstone to its knees. As George observed, it looked like the Devil had foreclosed.

There is more in this journal than just Tombstone's tribulations. Parsons gives his personal views upon Apache raiding, the merits of George Crook versus Nelson Miles. He was on hand to witness the introduction of heliograph to military operations and watched as members of Geronimo's band straggled toward Fort Bowie. His account of events along the Sonoran border, ranching activities in the Sulphur Spring Valley, and mining at Arivaca are incomparable. If you have Parsons' earlier journal you'll want this volume. This book is designed as a companion volume to *A Tenderfoot In Tombstone*, 6 x 9-inch format, 275 pages, printed endsheets and dust jacket in color. Augmenting the text are two interviews of George Parsons relative to events transpiring in the journal. As this edition is limited to 750 copies we suggest you reserve your's now. **Price: $36.95**

BOSQUE REDONDO: The Navajo Internment at Fort Sumner, New Mexico, 1863-68

March 1997 publication

By Lynn R. Bailey

The scorched earth policy of General James H. Carleton and Kit Carson destroyed Navajo subsistence, broke up family units, and brought quick results. Within months more than 8,000 Indians had surrendered to be carted and marched to Fort Sumner upon the Pecos River in east-central New Mexico. There, upon a forty mile square reserve known as Bosque Redondo, tribesmen lived for nearly five years. From 1863 until 1868 they obeyed military dictates as Carleton attempted to alter social structure and train tribesmen to live and interact like Pueblo peoples. However, this pastoral people, who had lived for generations in family groups, possessed no patterns for communal living on the scale envisioned by the military. The result was that regimentation created social stress that manifested itself in numerous ways, ranging from physical conflict among tribesmen, abandonment of the reservation by some Indians, and escapism through the practice of witchcraft. Adding to the pain of social upheaval and isolation, the Navajos suffered disease and starvation, as well as from raids by Plains Indians. In the end, the entire experiment collasped and the Navajos pleaded to be returned to their homeland.

From voluminous records of the U.S. Army and the Office of Indian Affairs, Mr. Bailey has drawn the documentation to detail a fascinating period of Navajo history. He does not stop there; reasons for the success of the Carleton-Carson campaign are presented, the several routes of the so-called Long Walk are traced, and social upheaval at Bosque Redondo is explored in light of current knowledge, as is army and civilian ineptitude, and the struggle between military leaders and Office of Indian Affairs officials for control of Indian policy. This attractive hard cover book is produced in 5½ x 8½ -inch format, contains 275 pages, 20 photos, maps and diagrams, notes, bibliography, and index. Dust jacket in color. Edition limited to 1,000 copies. **Price: $26.95**

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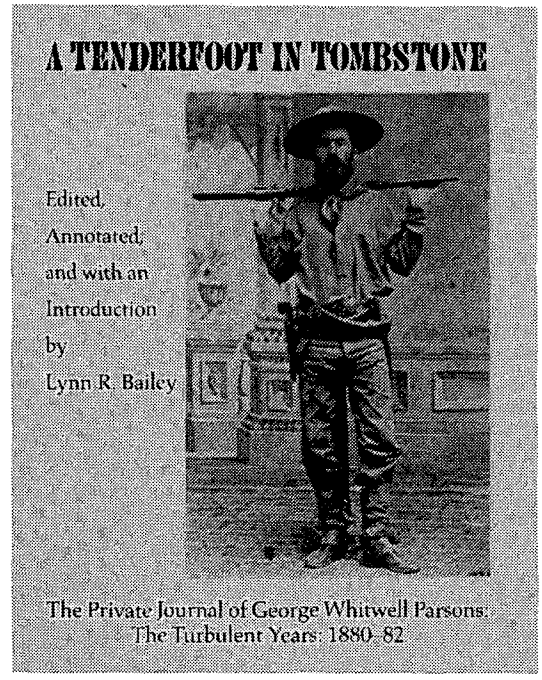

George Whitwell Parsons was an Easterner, trained as a banker, who wanted to carve a niche for himself in hardrock mining. To do so, he picked one of America's most isolated silver camps, Tombstone in Arizona Territory. Although he failed to find his El Dorado in southeastern Arizona, and never left an enduring mark on the region, he presented a priceless account of everyday life in Tombstone during its heyday.

George recorded not only his daily struggles in mining, but the ups-and-downs of the tempestuous community. Once he got used to the town's rough edges, Parsons became a community and county activist. He spearheaded a movement to build a Presbyterian church and bring ministers to Tombstone. As a member of the Citizens Safety Committee, he fought the fraudulent actions of the Tombstone Townsite Company and became an outspoken advocate for a no-nonsense approach to curbing the lawlessness then sweeping southeastern Arizona. His observations regarding crime and the town's response to it, as well as the Earp-cowboy vendetta have been quoted over and over again. In fall of 1881 Parsons joined a group of Tombstoners in a chase across the Sulphur Springs Valley to head off marauding Apaches before they escaped into Mexico. His comments regarding this sojourn are especially pertinent, when one considers that a month later members of this group would shoot it out on a Tombstone street.

George Parsons' journal offers much more than a glimpse into personal and political machinations. He brings forth the town's cosmopolitan atmosphere. It had two daily newspapers, and national theatrical troupes augmented hometown performances in a half dozen theaters. Restaurant food ran the gambit from bland Irish and Welsh fare to French cuisine. Ice cream and oysters were readily procurable, thanks to refrigeration. Besides offering a wealth of information on daily life in Tombstone, George's journal sheds great insight into community leadership with portraits of John Clum, J. V. Vickers, Dr. George Goodfellow, Michael Gray, Philip Morse, William H. Bayless, the Girds, and religious leaders Endicott Peabody and Joseph McIntyre. Added to this, Parsons presents a fascinating picture of emerging commerce, particularly the rigors of small-scale mining in the Tombstone District and in the Huachuca Mountains. Last but not least, George Parsons emerges from his journal as a complex man, with contrasting traits; tenacity being his dominant quality. And thanks to that tenacity he left the only available journal bearing upon Tombstone's early years.

This entertaining and compelling journal, first transcribed by the WPA in 1932 and published in 1972, has been redesigned and set in type. Obvious errors which crept into the WPA transcription have been corrected, and an introduction added, which casts light on George Parsons' background, personality and his eventful life after leaving Tombstone. Annotations and an index compliment the volume, as do engravings taken from the *Arizona Quarterly Illustrated* and the *Mining and Scientific Press,* two contemporary publications. This attractively designed hard cover book of 273 pages is composed in 6" x 9" format. It has printed endsheets and the dust jacket is in color. This is Volume 65 of Westernlore's Great West and Indian Series. ISBN 0-87026-095-2. As this edition is limited to 1,000 copies only, we suggest you reserve your book now. Price: $36.95

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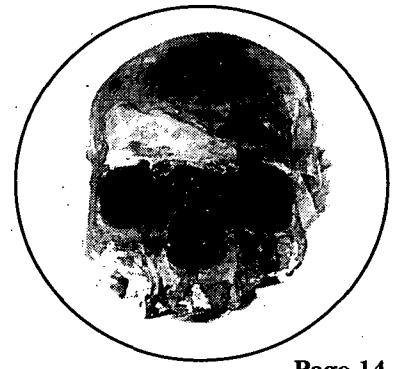


Page 14

FEATURES

14 **Uneasy Lies the Ghost of Willis Sexton.** *By Glenn Shirley.* An Oklahoma farmer has disappeared, and his Indian father suspects foul play.

21 **Gunfight at Checotah.** *By Edward Herring.* Two lawmen end a friendship in a hail of gunfire.

24 **Coal, Cattle, and Onions.** *By Arthur Shoemaker.* Although it never became the great empire that was envisioned, the Rio Grande and Eagle Pass Railroad did contribute to the history and development of the West.

28 **Quanah Parker, the Quahada Comanches' Last Chief.** *By Spring de Leon.* This chief lived in the world of both the Indian and the white man, but fought for the Comanche way of life.

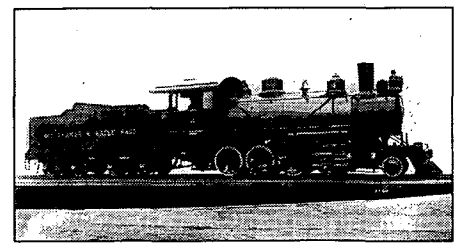
31 ***True West* Legends: The Sundance Kid.** *By Donna B. Ernst.* Four-page pullout highlights the life and times of one of the last great outlaws.

39 **The Willcox Commercial Company.** *By Phyllis de la Garza.* This store supplied groceries and hardware to Arizona pioneers and is still in operation today.

41 **Poker and Pool Cues.** *By Larry Underwood.* A disgruntled card player takes a foolish gamble.

42 **The Angel of Goliad.** *By Don Blevins.* She was the wife of one of Santa Anna's officers but fought to protect Texian prisoners.

50 **The First Wife.** *By Catherine Lazers Bauer.* After striking it rich, Horace Tabor decides he no longer needs his better half.



Page 24

Page 42

Our Cover

The Sundance Kid
By Richard Ignarski

Departments

3 **From the Editor**
4 ***True West* Cartoon**
5 **Truly Western**
7 **Western Roundup**
10 **Trails Grown Dim**
12 **Footnotes**
54 **Answer Man**
59 **Wild Old Days**
62 ***True West* Crossword**

Page 50

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FROM THE EDITOR

Howdy, ya'll!

Although you're reading this well into the new year, I wanted to share a tale from late 1996.

If anything, history is a breeding ground for checks and balances. In theory, we learn from mistakes of the past and use those lessons to create a more secure future. Perhaps that is why the American West is so dear to us. However, it's unfortunate that some have either turned a blind eye to our history or view it with selective hindsight.

Our offices are located in Stillwater, Oklahoma, home to Oklahoma State University, the school I attended. Between easy access to sporting events and the energy that follows young minds at work, living and working in a college town is a constant source of amusement and wonder. But what happened recently on the campus was not amusing, although it does make one wonder.

While other students were preparing for the annual football rivalry between OSU and the Sooners of the University of Oklahoma, four members of a local fraternity and one of their friends decided to go on a prank spree. After dressing the statue of a former college president, the five spied their next target.

November is Native American Heritage month and the Native American Student Association chose to share their culture with the students of OSU by erecting a traditional teepee on the front lawn. After the removal of the lodge poles, the five pranksters sent hundreds of years of Indian history crashing to the ground with one shove.

The administration moved quickly to punish the five; two were suspended and all were encouraged to apologize to the Native American students, which they did. The president distanced himself and the school from such actions and also apologized for the incident. The fraternity launched an investigation that resulted in the removal of twenty members for various infractions.

If this were a new incident it would be quickly filed away as another mindless stunt pulled by a select few, but unfortunately it isn't. The same thing happened last year, and the year before at another Oklahoma school. I guess it has been happening for a long time in some way or another.

When the United States expanded West and Indians were placed "conveniently" on reservations, away from fertile farm lands and glistening goldfields, the atrocities on both sides knew no bounds. The Indians faced a fight every time they ventured out for food for their starving families. The whites faced retribution for creating homes in a land the government claimed was safe from attack. Neither side recognized the other's traditions and beliefs other than those which were forced upon them.

I know views and interpretations of history differ; I'm not going to argue that. My concern is that history as a whole will be ignored. If any facet of history is ignored, then we will continue to repeat the mistakes and not learn the lessons of the past. Those lessons come with a cost I don't think people ever want to pay again.

Perhaps if those five college students had taken time to learn about the chain of events that led to them sneaking across that dark campus, they would have seen not a bunch of sticks and cloth, but a symbol, one of many that represent our country.

Part of their punishment is that the students must now do research papers on Indian history. Maybe in the process they will learn something about the past and, hopefully, themselves.

Marcus Huff

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PORTRAIT OF A MOUNTAIN MAN: JIM BECKWOURTH

BY WILLIAM HENDERSON

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TRULY WESTERN

A COLD BOTTLE OF POP & GOOD WESTERN READIN'

Congratulations and best wishes to you in your new position as *True West* editor. I liked your editorial in the November '96 issue very much. I agree with you. In my opinion today's western writers have lost the "smell of frying bacon over the campfire," "the music of the coyote," and the "excitement of a gunfight on a dusty main street." Those things make "reading western stories on the front porch with a cold bottle of pop," a priceless experience for young and old. The best of luck to you.—*George Gardiner, Sonoita, Arizona.*

Digging Up Etta Place

I miss "Trails Grown Dim," but I also love a strange story. Years ago in *True West* you published a story that got me to thinking.

My parents used to talk of an Etta Place, who Dad said was a teacher and got into bad company. Mother and Dad said she was very pretty, they claimed to have known her around 1905 in Minneapolis. When I read that article I was floored. It reported Etta's escapades with the Sundance Kid and said the police were looking for her well into the 1930s.

One day I was sitting here knitting and had a weird idea. I telephoned Lakewood Cemetery in Minneapolis and asked if they possibly had an Etta Place in their records and they had an "Ella Place" who had died at the Mayo Clinic in 1945. They told me it was very strange and rare that the home town was not mentioned in any records and she was around eighty-four years old. Her next of kin was listed as an "Edward." I thought this might be of interest to your readers. It's amazing to me to think this could be the real Etta Place.—*Jane Mowry Fish, Mound, Minnesota.*

Editor's Note: You picked a good time to drop us a line, Ms. Fish. As soon as you get to page ten, you'll be happy to notice that we have revived "Trails Grown Dim" and you will be even happier when you see the big picture of Sundance and Etta in our centerfold. As far as finding that grave, your story is mighty interesting indeed. I'm sure your letter will send western historians scrambling to that old resting place way up there in Minnesota in no time.

How About a Special Issue...

I just stopped by your web site to say howdy and to tell you how much I enjoy both *Old West* and *True West.* They have given me many hours of reading pleasure and they help me relax at the end of a long day. How about a suggestion to devote an issue to the history of California, New Mexico, Colorado, Montana, or the Dakotas. Again, thank you for a very enjoyable magazine.—*Tim Shope, via the Internet.*

Editor's Note: I would love to devote an entire issue to those states, Tim, but I'm afraid the rest of the folks out here in the West would throw me out with the dishwater if I didn't include their state too!

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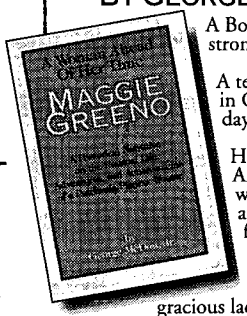

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Wranglin' Rattlers

By Jan Holden

"Rattlesnakes were one of the most generally hated and feared creatures of the West. The men of the old West habitually killed them from a sense of duty."

—*A Dictionary of the Old West,* compiled by Peter Watts

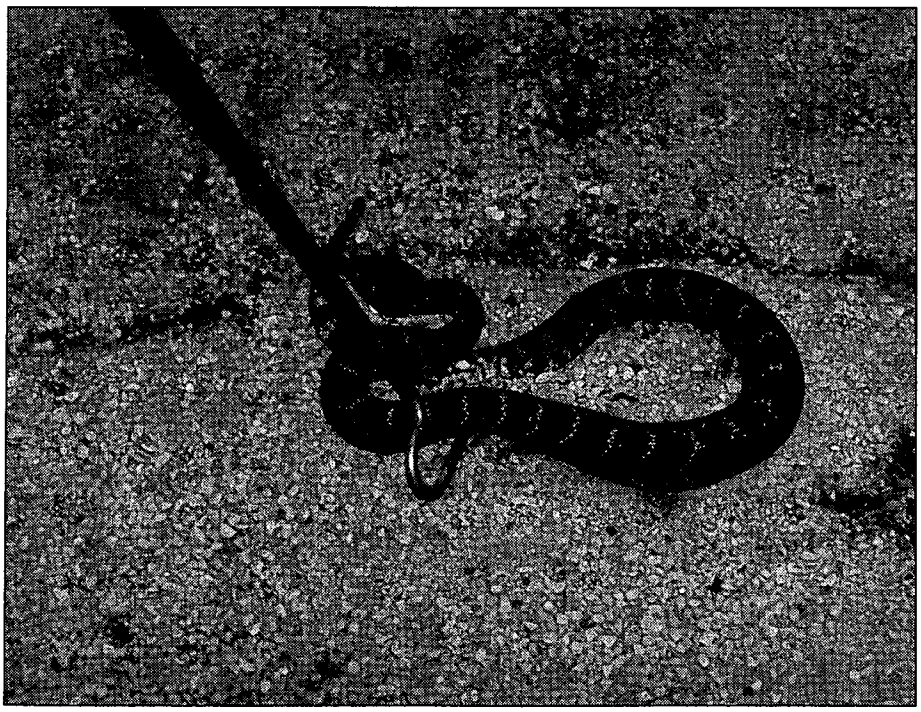
Every year the friendly folks of Okeene, Oklahoma, bring a little of the old West back for modern-day cowpokes and those just interested in history. The town hosts one of America's most unique and potentially dangerous sporting events—the "bring 'em back alive" Rattlesnake Roundup.

Though Okeene's population is normally just over a thousand, hundreds of thrill-seeking men, women, and children flock into town once a year for the festivities. There's something for everyone. A street fair, food booths, carnival rides, souvenirs, educational exhibits, and for the truly daring, the chance to snatch a rattlesnake routed from its cozy den after a long winter's nap.

This grand daddy of snake hunts had its beginnings fifty-seven years ago when area ranchers decided they must reduce the rattlesnake population which was killing off their cattle and kin with great regularity. Today, the roundup is mostly a fund-raising event, sponsored by the Okeene Jaycees.

There are two days of carnival-like merrymaking including a flea market, pancake breakfast, storytelling, and a rodeo. On the third day, those who have registered for the hunt set out for the rocky gypsum hills southwest of Okeene with their snake hooks, game bags, and if they are savvy, an emergency first-aid kit! Their goal is to bring back to Okeene's Main Street the largest rattler they can possibly rustle.

Snakes are weighed and mea-



Author's photo

A captured ratttlesnake.

BILLY THE KID SLEPT HERE.

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sured in the afternoon and prize money and trophies awarded to the first, second, and third place winners. It's not unusual for a winning rattler to measure eighty inches and weigh in at more than twenty-five pounds.

Many of the captured snakes are sold to zoos or laboratories. The latter covet the snakes for their venom, which is extracted for medical needs. Ironically, for years it was the only known serum to counteract the deadly rattlesnake bite. A few wind up butchered and batter-dipped, making a "snake snack" that lots of folks call a real delicacy.

Author's photo

An Oklahoma snake rustler shows a rattler's fangs.

For information about this annual adventure, contact the Okeene Chamber of Commerce at (405) 822-3005 or write The Okeene Record, P.O. Box 664, Okeene, Oklahoma 73763.

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Other Western Roundup Events

Fun Festival

The seventh annual National Festival of the West is tentatively slated for March 13-26 at Rawhide western theme park in Scottsdale, Arizona. The festival has been named one of the top 250 events in the country by *Events Business News Magazine Special Events Directory.*

This year's festival boasts a chili cook-off, a chuck wagon cooking competition, live western music, cowboy poetry, a ranch rodeo, and a mountain man encampment, as well as one of the nation's largest western trade shows, featuring 250 western merchants.

The festival teaches the history of the Old West, the legend and lore of the cowboy, and shows the past and present influence of the "romantic Old West" depicted in Hollywood.

The theme park where the festival is held is at 23023 N. Scottsdale Road, Scottsdale, Arizona. Gates open at 10:00 AM, and the ticket price is $7. For more information call (602) 996-4387 or check the World Wide Web at www.festival-

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Saddlemaker to the Stars

The Autry Museum of Western Heritage in Los Angeles, California will be displaying the leather and silver art of Edward H. Bohlin through March 2.

Bohlin is known for his intricate leather and silver work. He made saddles, gun belts, and spurs for such famous cowboy and horse pairs as the Lone Ranger and Silver, Roy Rogers and Trigger, Hopalong Cassidy and Topper, and the Cisco Kid and Diablo.

Bohlin came to the United States at age seventeen drawn by a fascination with the American cowboy and inspired by Buffalo Bill Cody's show in Europe. Upon arriving in the states, he entered apprenticeship as a working cowboy, taught himself the art of tooling leather and working silver, and ultimately built a thriving enterprise that attracted celebrity clients and earned him the reputation and nickname "Saddlemaker to the Stars."

The Autry Museum of Western Heritage is located in Griffith Park at 4700 Western Heritage Way, adjacent to the Los Angeles Zoo. The museum is open 10 AM to 5 PM daily, except Mondays. For more information call (213) 667-2000.

Remington at Eiteljorg

The Eiteljorg Museum of American Indians and Western Art in Indianapolis, Indiana, will be displaying an exhibit entitled "In Search of Fredric Remington" from February 1 through April 20.

The exhibit will place a special emphasis on drawing visitors into the mind of Remington, exploring his inspirations, how his works evolved, how his style changed over twenty years, and what has prompted so many people to copy his work.

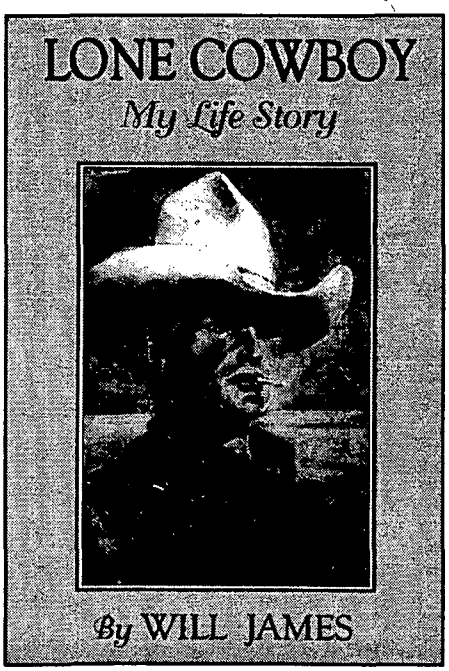
Though Remington is perhaps best known for his sculptures, the exhibit will contain primarily oils, watercolors, and drawings.

The show will also display fakes and forgeries and offer tips on how to tell the difference between them and the genuine article. The exhibit also will look at what captivated the contemporary writers who made Remington's name a household word.

Another upcoming exhibit at Eiteljorg includes "In the Presence of the Past: The Miami Indians of Indiana," opening April 19.

For more information on either of these exhibits, call (317) 264-1724 or check the World Wide Web at www.eiteljorg.org.

Western Roundup is a report on places to go and things to see associated with the history of the Old West. Submissions are welcome. Information on scheduled events should be submitted at least four months prior to the event. Items on historic places are also welcome. Send information including photos to: Western Roundup, Western Publications, P.O. Box 2107, Stillwater, OK 74076.



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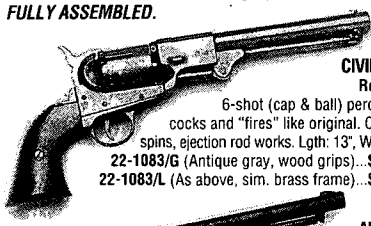

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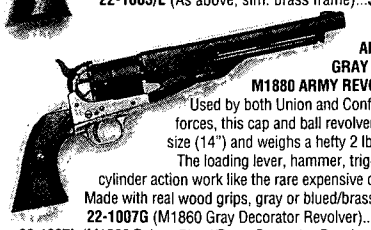

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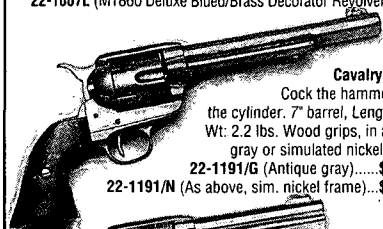

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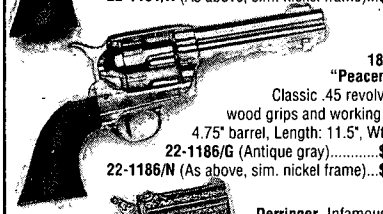

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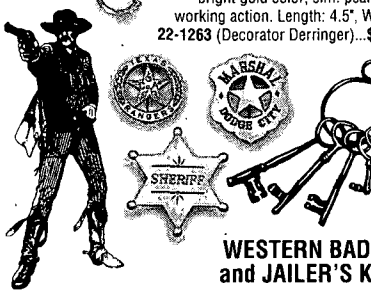

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TRAILS GROWN DIM

BACK IN THE SADDLE AGAIN

Editor's Note: *A few issues back, I mentioned that we don't get much mail for "Trails Grown Dim" anymore. Well, I should have just bit my tongue then and there. We got so many letters in one week's time that it looks like "Trails" will be back on the pages of* True West *for a long time. For those who wrote, I hope you find the folks you're looking for. For those still looking, send us a note and we'll try to help ya.*

Taylor

I have been told a relative went to Texas and a town was named after him. I have been to Taylor, Texas, and Taylor County (Abilene) with no luck. I don't even have a time frame to search for, much less a name.

Anyone by the Taylor name and/or relatives who will write, I will appreciate it.

You have some great stories which make me wish I was born out West rather than North Carolina, but we don't choose our bale of hay, do we?

Keep the good stories coming and I'll get the magazine whenever I'm on the road.—**Allen B. Taylor, P.O. Box 1262, Carolina Beach, North Carolina 28428.**

McKinney

Love your magazine. You said "Trails Grown Dim" got no inquiries. I've got one.

I was raised in the hill country of southern Ohio and a badman by the name of Bob McKinney was a legend of note there. He went West in the late 1800s and worked with some gangs. He came back to Ohio in the late 1800s and lived in a small house along Paint Creek in Highland County.

All of that land was flooded (including the farm I grew up on) with a dam project. There was a big move to save and restore the McKinney cabin. That's about all the info I have, except there was a limestone cave below old Route 50 that they called "McKinney's Cave," which he repeatedly used for a hideout. At least that's the legend. I'm too young to know, being only sixty-nine.—**John R. Harper, 10781 N. Anthenia Drive, Citrus Springs, Florida 34434.**

Brandon

In 1947 I graduated from school in Odessa, Texas, in Ector County. My maiden name was Couch. My friend was Katherine Brandon. She went to college, I to work.

She married a Gene Williams and they lived in Abilene, Texas. Her brother, Jim Brandon, married a Wanda Rich and they lived in Las Vegas, Nevada. I would love to hear from these people.

I've taken *Old West, True West,* and *Frontier Times* for several years and have saved them. Really like the magazines, from cover to cover and back again. Sure hope you continue forever.—**Dossylene (Dee) Couch Dixon, 7006 Foxwick, Humble, Texas 77338.**

Clanton

I was reading your October 1996 issue, when I came across a particular item that made me curious.

On page 58, there is an item about "Old Man" Clanton.

I am interested in the Clantons because we are related. My ninth great-grandfather and Newman "Old Man" Clanton's sixth great-grandfather was the same person.

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I can't seem to find a book about the Clantons, please forward my name to anyone with any information on them.—**D. Worthington, 2014 Bancroft Street, Omaha, Nebraska 68108.**

Hays

I am seeking information on possible documents of a William Owen Hays, born about 1840 and brother to Benjamin Franklin Hays, born in 1821 in Virginia.

The Hays family moved to Missouri in 1830 and eventually to Bonham, Texas. The picture included with this letter shows a Hays family group visiting Pike's Peak about 1900. Hopefully, someone may still be around to shed some information on the family.—**John Hays, 501 South Texas, Apartment 619, Mercedes, Texas 78570.**

Courtesy of John Hays

Benjamin Franklin Hays (left, standing) at Pikes Peak, Colorado.

Readers' letters for "Trails Grown Dim" are printed as soon as space permits, so please be patient. Please print or type your query and limit letters to 150 words or less. Photos are welcome. We can't run current "missing persons" notices or lengthy genealogical requests, but we do attempt to print all letters. Any reader having information concerning persons referred to above is asked to communicate directly with the letter writer; please do not write to us.

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Edited by Herbert O. Brayer

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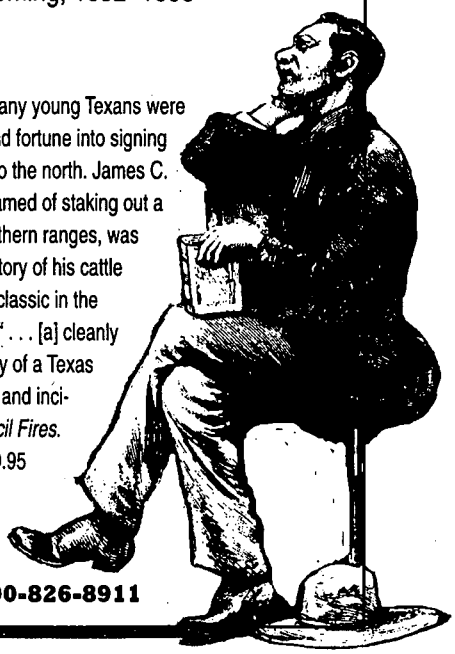

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JOHN KINNEY: A POSTSCRIPT

BY FREDERICK NOLAN

Editor's Note: *The search for history is neverending. Biographers, researchers, and authors are forever finding new information on their subjects in the form of photos, dusty documents, and overgrown graves in long forgotten cemeteries. This information often comes to light only after the books have been written, the movies made, and the articles published. With* Footnotes, *we hope to offer a venue for historians to "scratch the itch" and share their latest findings with you, the reader.*

There are times when a researcher begins to believe that there really is some kind of "Murphy's Law" attached to the task of trying to set the historical record straight—the rule being that as soon as everything you know about the subject of your research is published—*but not until it is published*—new information will immediately appear. So it has proved with "Boss Rustler: The Life and Times of John Kinney" in response to my request that they search for more documentation of his career, his grandson, George Linn, found a number of documents which show conclusively that not only did the United States Army unfairly dismiss his claim for pension, but that in all probability the claims he made for service as a scout in the Apache wars, action against the Sioux in Nebraska, and service in the Spanish-American War were justified.

Take, for instance, his claims to have fought in engagements against Cochise. A document headed "Headquarters Troop 'K' 3rd Cavalry, Camp Bowie, A.T. January 19, 1871," promulgated by Captain Gerald Russell, commanding officer, confirms his presence there and contains Paymaster Major Charles Jefferies Sprague's commendation of Sergeant Kinney for "thorough efficiency" and the men of his party for "discipline and soldierly conduct" on an unspecified assignment. Kinney claimed his detachment "fought with Cochise's Band in Horse Shoe Canyon, October 24, 1871."

This is a significant validation; for on that date, following a raid by sixty Apaches on a ranch at San Simon, Captain Gerald Russell and twenty-five men pursued the raiders into Horseshoe Canyon in the Chiricahua Mountains where they fought a four-hour pitched battle in which guide Bob Whitney was killed and one trooper wounded. Apache losses were not known, but considering that over 2,000 rounds were fired by the soldiers "with great deliberation," it may be assumed they were not light. Kinney's naming of Cochise as the leader is especially significant. At the time,

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Russell maintained he had seen the Apache leader during the fight. Recent research indicates Cochise was probably not there, but Kinney would not have known that. Russell's commendation of Kinney as "a brave soldier...a sober and honest man" would seem to be all the additional confirmation that is necessary.

Other documents support his statements that he scouted against Ogalala Sioux at Fort McPherson and for George P. Buell out of Fort Cummings in 1881. Letters signed personally by General Leonard Wood describe Kinney's work in Cuba as "faithful and excellent" and his character "above question." Just a few months before his last illness, he even expressed regret that he could not go to France with the American Expeditionary Force. By this time Kinney had so convincingly become the popular and respected frontiersman who appears in the glowing obituaries that marked his death that it is quite clear none of his Arizonian contemporaries were remotely aware of the truth about his murderously violent New Mexico past.

So in the end, the old bandit "went straight." If we had written his obituary, perhaps we might say now, with some justification:

"In his later life he was never a liar—but he was economical with the truth."

Frederick Nolan is a leading authority on the history of the American Southwest. He founded the English Westerner's Society and his historical works include Bad Blood: The Life and Times of the Horrell Brothers, John Henry Tunstall, *and the acclaimed* The Lincoln County War. *His article "Boss Rustler: The Life and Times of John Kinney" was featured as a two-part series in the September and October 1996 issues of* True West.

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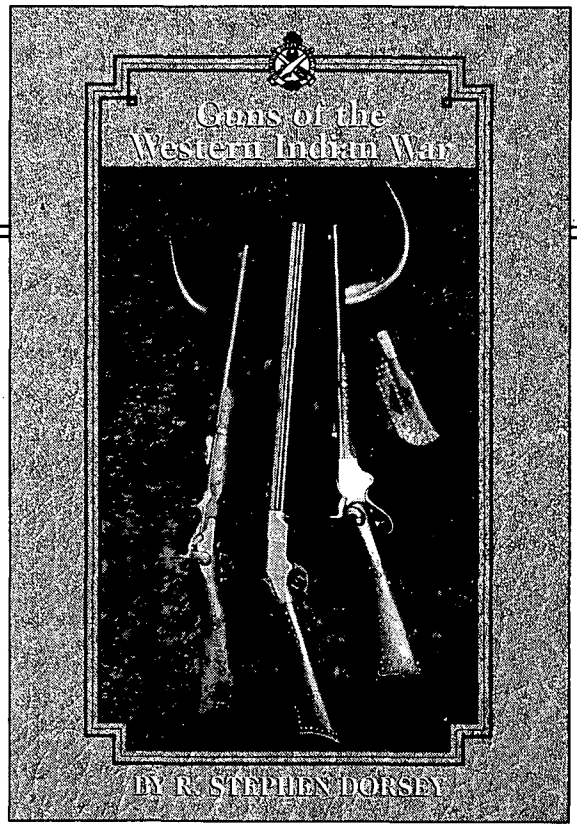

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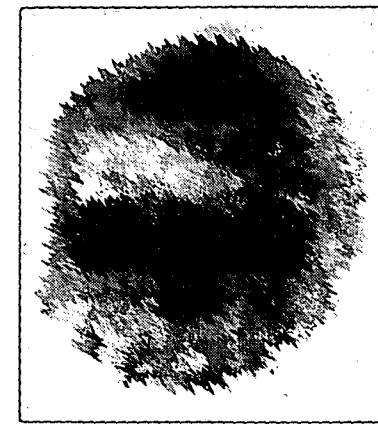
Uneasy Lies the Ghost of Willis Sexton

by Glenn Shirley



Sheriff O.P. Ray, of Atoka, Oklahoma, listened carefully as the grizzled Choctaw Indian, Dickson Sexton, explained the disappearance of his son, Willis. The summer sunlight filtering through the tree just outside Ray's office made crazy, trembling patterns across his desk as he jotted down detailed notes.

"You say he was last seen at the Pittsburg picnic?" The old father nodded.

Ray pondered. The picnic, an annual affair, had been held on Saturday, June 9, 1917. This was the middle of July. It was too obvious a length of time for a person to be absent from his usual haunts—especially an exceedingly popular figure like Willis Sexton.

Ray knew him well. In fact, Willis had been among his most ardent supporters when he had quit the livery business to become sheriff of Atoka County in 1913.

Willis was forty years of age, nearly six feet tall, darkly handsome, with coal black Indian hair which he wore parted in the middle and bunched up in wavy, white-man's style. He dressed nicely on social occasions. A gold-crowned tooth next to an eyetooth in the left front of his mouth added to the attraction of his easy smile. He and his wife, Maggie, farmed near Wesley, twenty miles northeast of Atoka. Pittsburg was ten miles further north, just over the Atoka-Pittsburg county line. Any mysterious absence of the well-liked farmer, Ray thought, should have already been brought to his attention by the Wesley community. Yet more than a month had passed without anyone becoming alarmed except his father. Maggie Sexton was in Arkansas, where she had gone about mid-June to visit an aunt who was seriously ill. Dickson Sexton had made the fifty-mile trip by team and wagon from his home at Cedars' Bunch Town near Tuskahoma, in Latimer County, to see the authorities.

Was there anything particular about Willis' disappearance that had brought the old Indian to Atoka?

There was. Willis was a good, dutiful son. A week had never passed but what Willis had come to see his father or sent him a message. They were unusually close.

"That's why I know something terrible has happened. I feel it—in here...." Dickson Sexton clutched a bony hand to his chest, as his black eyes stared at the sheriff beseechingly.

Ray experienced a vague feeling at the strange look in Sexton's eyes, but he shrugged it away. A practical officer, he was not interested in intangible impressions. He could not investigate them.

He pointed out that Willis was happily married, had a prosperous farm and no known enemies. Who would want to harm him?

Slowly the Indian shook his head. "I believe what I feel," he replied, and again clutched his chest, almost agitated.

"You're getting yourself worked up needlessly," Ray said, trying to calm his fears. "I think you'll hear from Willis, soon. But I'll check into the matter and let you know if I learn anything, one way or the other."

Viewed in hard logic, Dickson Sexton's presentiment did seem magnified beyond reality. The next morning, however, after the old father's departure, Sheriff Ray traveled to the Wesley community to make the promised inquiry.

The Sexton farm lay on a prairie three-quarters of a mile southwest of the main road running east from the Wesley post office and store. The white frame house and front porch faced east—a four-roomed affair, with bedrooms on the north and south and dining room and kitchen between. There was a smokehouse a few yards to the west, a barn, and beyond, some 200 acres of fields, pasture, and hay-meadow. In the meadow stood a small grove of postoak and blackjack. Everything seemed in order: the hay cut, cotton chopped, the stock well-attended by Jesse Williams, the Sextons' hired hand.

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Ray was acquainted with Jesse—a lanky, twenty-two-year-old youth with pale blue eyes, weighing no more than 140 pounds. Jesse had worked at one place and another around Atoka as a boy, coming to the Sexton place in 1916 to help Willis pick cotton and gather corn. Maggie Sexton was his cousin. He greeted the sheriff with a friendly smile, which gave way to a look of surprise when Ray informed him of his mission.

"I went up to Pittsburg with Willis and Maggie," Jesse said. "Came back with them. Maggie got word that her aunt was very sick and went to Arkansas. Willis and I chopped cotton a couple of days. Then he dressed up and took off afoot toward Wesley."

He hadn't been concerned about Willis' absence. Willis was in the habit of going off for a week or more at a time. Jesse figured he had gone to Arkansas to meet Maggie, and bring her home.

Ray didn't mention Dickson Sexton's visit—just advised Jesse to keep the nature of his inquiry under his hat, no use stirring up the community when it didn't seem necessary.

Author's Collection

Willis Sexton. An unusual absence from his farm prompted a six-year investigation.

The sheriff continued his quiet investigation. He learned that Maggie Sexton had picked up a letter from Arkansas at the Wesley post office upon returning from Pittsburg. But Willis had not been seen in Wesley since the picnic.

W.J. Conger farmed a mile south of Wesley. The Sexton house could be plainly seen from the front of his home. Both he and Willis were musicians and singers, entertained together at many public gatherings, and had much in common—even down to their gold crowned teeth. They discussed the misery of toothache a great deal and visited frequently.

But Conger hadn't seen his neighbor since before the picnic at Pittsburg. "Must have been the 8th or 9th of June," he told Ray. "He was at the hay press there at his house. Went over to get him to cut my oats. I had thirty acres to cut. Willis failed to show, and Jesse helped me. Jesse worked for me sometimes—he built my barn." Conger agreed that Willis probably had gone to Arkansas—from which he and his wife would return shortly.

The sheriff asked him, as he had Williams, to keep his mission quiet, and decided to make no further inquiries in the neighborhood.

In an effort to determine what direction the missing farmer had taken after leaving afoot toward Wesley, Ray went ten miles north to Kiowa, in Pittsburg County. Kiowa was the nearest station on the Missouri, Kansas, and Texas (Katy) Railroad. But no one of Willis' description had been seen boarding a train there.

Alvie Neal, a brother-in-law married to Willis' sister, lived eight miles southeast of Kiowa. Neither he nor his wife had seen Willis since the Pittsburg picnic.

"I lived with Willis part of the time last year," Neal said. "He was away from home considerably. Off on trips, and left Maggie to run the farm. I never knew where he went. His father has been trying to get some trace of him. Willis is probably taking care of his personal affairs. It's just his old father's Indian superstition."

Ray agreed that he needed something more tangible to work with and decided to drop his inquiry until Maggie Sexton returned from Arkansas.

Maggie came home at the end of July. When informed that the sheriff had been prying around, she promptly called at his office, visibly distraught, and demanded that he drop the matter entirely.

"It's not that easy, Mrs. Sexton," Ray drawled. "Your husband has disappeared under strange circumstances, and I will have to know why."

The woman flushed, seemed confused, but there was nothing confusing in her answer. Willis was prone to make trips, never telling her

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Author's Collection

Sheriff O.P. Ray, a practical officer, couldn't base a murder investigation on Indian superstitions.

about them. He hadn't told her about going away this time. What was so strange about that?

"Well," said Ray, "he did leave his farm—everything he possessed. And he's been gone an unusually long while, don't you think?"

"And he won't be back!" Maggie Sexton covered her pretty face with her hands. "Everyone thinks we were perfectly happy, but we weren't. I've done all I could, but it hasn't helped."

"What are you talking about?" Ray asked.

"More than once Willis offered me everything he had for his freedom," she whispered, hoarsely. "I guess he decided to take it without my consent and made his offer good. He has run off with another woman."

Tears broke in her blue eyes and ran down her cheeks. "I want nothing more said about it," she sobbed, then arose suddenly and almost ran from the office.

Ray stared after her, stunned, not by the woman's actions, but the fact that Willis Sexton had been unfaithful to his wife. He was convinced that he should contact Dickson Sexton. But he didn't have to—Dickson Sexton appeared at his office the next morning, unexpectedly.

The thought of another woman in his son's life was repulsive to the old Indian, and as he listened to the sheriff's explanation, he shook his head from side to side.

"I don't believe it. My boy would never dishonor his family. It is not the Choctaw way."

"Love causes men to do funny things," Ray offered. "Let's face it, Dickson. Let Maggie and Willis work out their affair with the least possible publicity."

"No! No!" The old Indian's voice was guttural and emphatic. "It is not true, I tell you! I feel it—in here." He clutched a bony hand to his chest, staring as if he had seen a ghost. "My son is dead!"

Ray felt the same vagueness as when Dickson Sexton had first come to him in mid-July. But again he cast it aside. There was no evidence of a corpse. He needed more than Indian superstition, but promised to continue looking into the matter until the old man was satisfied.

Ray went to Wesley for another talk with Conger. Maggie Sexton was across the way, working in her yard. Jesse Williams was at Conger's, putting up hay.

Conger conceded knowing about Willis Sexton's trips away from home. "He'd be gone sometimes for a week," the farmer said. "But he never told me it was to see other women."

Williams verified what Neal and Maggie had told the sheriff. "Maggie tried to keep Willis at home. Tried to break him from running with other women, but never followed him. She stayed at the farm, done the housework and milking and such. When we went to town, she even drove the wagon.

"Willis was pretty crazy about one girl. Wanted to marry her. Never told me who she was or where she lived. Asked me once to talk to Maggie about divorcing him, but I never did. I didn't want to get mixed up in their affairs. Didn't

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even know Maggie knew about it.

"Willis was a decent sort, even if he did hand Maggie a dirty deal. Told me Maggie wouldn't have to sue him for alimony, because he would give her everything he had."

It was understandable that a man would leave his crops and land. He would hardly dare stick around and dispose of his possessions if he decided to run off with another woman. Wherever Willis Sexton had gone, Conger and Williams agreed, he had gone on his own free will.

Friends in the community expressed disbelief at the farmer's reported infidelity. But as the days passed, they became angered with Willis, sympathetic with Maggie. Obviously crushed, the woman built a foreboding wall about herself, and attempts to console her were futile. Some suggested that when Willis had time to think it over he would be sorry and come back to Wesley. Maggie shook her head. She didn't want him back. Never. He had made his choice and would have to live with it. A few cynics said, "Maybe she's better off without him."

Williams stayed at the farm until September, when he was drafted into the army for service in World War I and was sent to France. Shortly thereafter, Maggie filed for a divorce in the Atoka County district court, charging desertion. Notice was published in the newspapers, but there was no contest to the suit. The divorce was granted, with a property settlement.

The only objection came from the old Indian father. Dickson Sexton grieved and continued to haunt the sheriff's office. "Don't let this happen, don't let everyone believe my boy has gone away with another woman. He has not! I tell you he is dead. "

Ray wasn't satisfied with everyone else's conclusion. His four-year term as sheriff expired in December, however, and he went to work on a ranch near Atoka, leaving his successor, Bob Sumter, to wrestle with the problem.

With the extension of the Selective Service Act to include men up to age forty-five, Sheriff Sumter thought that Willis Sexton might turn up. But if he had joined the armed forces, he had done so under an assumed name.

Author's Collection

Maggie Sexton. The people of Atoka thought she and Willis were happily married.

The search was revived a couple of times during the war. Once Sumter requested LeFlore County officers to investigate a stranger fitting Willis Sexton's description with a young woman and child who were camped near Wister. They checked out to be a family visiting from Arkansas. Again, Willis was reported to be living in the Winding Stair mountain country of southeastern Latimer County, which also proved false. Dickson Sexton's trips to the sheriff's office became less frequent as his age began to tell on him. Finally he quit coming at all, and the scandal was virtually forgotten.

Maggie Sexton, too, forgot her sorrow. Because of the war, she found it difficult to obtain help at the farm. She leased the place to Newt and Winnie Wood, from nearby Burris Valley, and found work in Atoka. She smiled warmly again, stopped and talked to people on the street, laughed gaily at jokes. Cautious inquiry revealed she had fallen in love. The object of her fas-

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Author's Collection

Scorched stains on the bedroom floor of the Sexton home led investigators to believe Dickson Sexton.

cination was an eligible bachelor named Arthur DeGraff. Within a few weeks they were married, and left Atoka County.

The war ended. Jesse Williams was discharged at Camp Funston, Kansas, and returned to the Sexton farm in 1919. During the fall, he worked for Newt and Winnie Wood, then departed for the Burkburnett oil fields in Wichita County, Texas.

In 1928, O.P. Ray decided to run for sheriff again. Atoka County voters elected him by a large majority in November, and he took office on January 1, 1923. A few days later, he looked up from making returns on some civil papers to see Dickson Sexton in the doorway.

The Indian wore only a light coat, despite the biting cold outside. He had thinned almost to the point of emaciation. His black eyes burned feverishly in a wrinkled, paling face.

"Hello, Dickson," Ray greeted. "You look as if you've seen another ghost."

"Maybe I have," the Indian said. As he creaked into a chair, the sunlight filtering through the tree outside the office made crazy patterns across the sheriff's desk. It reminded Ray of a similar afternoon in 1917.

"I am getting old, very old," the Indian was saying. "This may be the last time I can come see you. My son would have come to me or written me if he was still alive. I cannot go to my grave without knowing what has become of my son.

"Sheriff, you must help me...."

Dickson Sexton then revealed some startling information. He had just come from visiting Newt and Winnie Wood. The Sexton farm had been purchased by a neighbor, Tom Crowson, after the Woods moved back to Burris Valley in 1920. They now lived at Jumbo, southeast of Wesley in Pushmataha County, where Mrs. Wood had become postmistress. Mrs. Wood had confided to Dickson Sexton that, while cleaning up the Sexton house upon moving there in 1919, she had found some stains on the north bedroom floor which appeared to have been taken up with hot embers. But most farmers had stains on their floors, and the mystery of Willis Sexton's disappearance apparently had been explained, so she had not mentioned her discovery. The stains were dark brown and looked like blood!

Ray went out to the farm for a "look-see." Crowson was readily cooperative. Though he had been living on the place four years, he had given the stains no thought. They were still there—several burns in a splotch where the bed had set across the north window. Other minor spots ranged from the window to the dining room.

Ray proceeded to Jumbo. Mrs. Wood verified what she had told Dickson Sexton. "While I lived at the place," she said, "I scrubbed the floor several times, but was never able to get the stains up."

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Then, somewhat hesitantly, she told Ray about a conversation she had with Jesse Williams while Jesse was working for her and her husband after his discharge from the army.

"We were sitting in the living room one Sunday evening. My husband was in Stringtown at a ball game. I asked Jesse, 'I wonder what ever become of Willis Sexton?' and he said, 'I don't know.' Then he sat there a while. I don't remember what was said during the time. Then he said, 'I will tell you confidentially. I shot him while Maggie was in Arkansas. He's buried out in the meadow—in that littie grove.'"

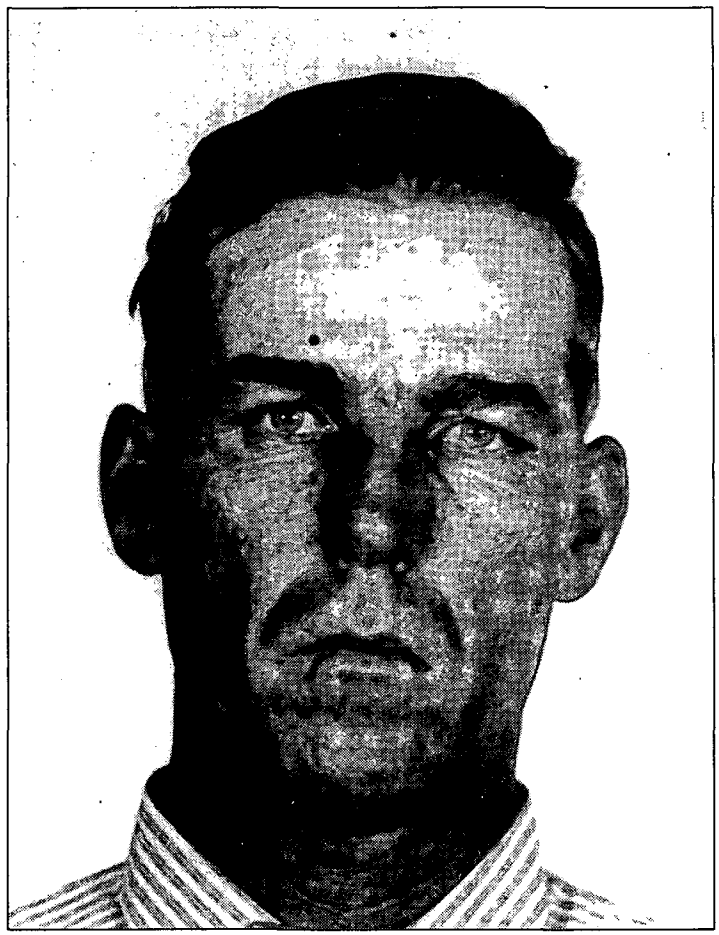
And why hadn't she reported this to the authorities?

The woman explained, simply: "Jesse left right after that, and I didn't tell my husband or anybody. I was confidentially informed about this, and when I tell a fellow I will keep anything confidentially, I don't make a newspaper out of myself. But when old Dickson came to me, I felt so sorry for him that I told him about those stains on the floor."

Back in Atoka, Ray laid his case before County Attorney I.O. Correll. Correll obtained a murder warrant for Jesse Williams. Ray notified the sheriff of Wichita County, Texas, and within hours, Williams was picked up at Burkburnett. He denied the charge and swore that Mrs. Wood had lied. Nonetheless, he waived extradition to Oklahoma. Ray jailed his prisoner at Coalgate, in adjoining Coal County, for safekeeping.

Maggie DeGraff was located at Hominy, Osage County, and entrained to Atoka at Ray's request. She acknowledged noticing the burned spots on the bedroom floor after returning from Arkansas. Told by Jesse that Willis had "spilled something there," she never knew they were bloodstains, and in the throes of her sorrow, she had made no connection with her former husband's disappearance. She was stunned at Jesse's arrest, and doubted the truthfulness of his conversation with Mrs. Wood.

Ray moved quickly to prove that the postmistress hadn't lied. He, Correll, Undersheriff Charlie Maxwell, and Special Deputy Lee Dillard went to the Crowson farm, armed with picks and shovels.



Author's Collection

Jesse Williams was not concerned about Willis Sexton's absence; he was in the habit of going away for weeks at a time.

After six years, a grave would have become well healed. Too, Crowson had built a couple of feeding troughs in the grove and cattle had trampled a wide area about them almost solid.

"We could dig around here for months and still not hit the right spot," Maxwell commented.

"We'll dig up the whole place if we have to—foot by foot," Ray said.

The grove of blackjack and post-oaks was about forty yards wide. The officers spread out, covering ten paces each, to search for a likely spot, when Ray noticed a small space where cattle hadn't trampled and not even shinnery grew. But this wasn't what caused him to call a halt.

He stood for a moment, staring eagerly, as if he expected the earth to yield its secret to his power of concentration. Then he knelt and shoveled a handful of dirt. As the fine earth dribbled from his fingers, the sunlight filtering through tree branches above seemed to make a weird pattern across this spot of yellow....

Ray knew the land here, and the others saw it plainly now; red, sandy clay mixed with rich, black loam, and the yellow soil on top. This red-yellow hardpan was down more than three feet. A hole had been dug deep enough to bury a man's body.

The officers went to work with their picks and shovels, excavating a space six feet long and three to four feet deep. Finally, Charlie Maxwell's pick struck something hard, and as he brought the pick back into the air, clinging to its point was a human skull. Glowing in the upper left of the gaping mouth was a gold-crowned tooth. There was a small hole in the left base of the skull, and in cleaning the dirt from the inside, Maxwell recovered a copper-jacketed .32 caliber bullet.

The officers worked carefully now. Sifting the earth with fingers and shovels, they found strands of brittle, coal black hair; arm, hip, leg and feet bones; and the bones of

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the spinal column—no remnants of clothing, but half a dozen underwear buttons on the point of disintegration.

There were enough bones to construct a skeleton, which when fitted together by Doctor T.H. Briggs, at Atoka, measured five feet ten inches, the approximate height of Willis Sexton. The Atoka dentist identified the gold-crowned tooth in the skull as work he had done. The hole in the skull had been made before the body was buried.

Willis Sexton not only had been shot in the brain, but murdered in his union suit while he slept.

The officers packaged the skull and took it to Coalgate. Ray had Jesse Williams brought from his cell and informed him he had recovered the remains of Willis Sexton. Jesse asked, "Where did you find them?"

Ray countered, "Don't you remember where you buried him? We have the skull with us."

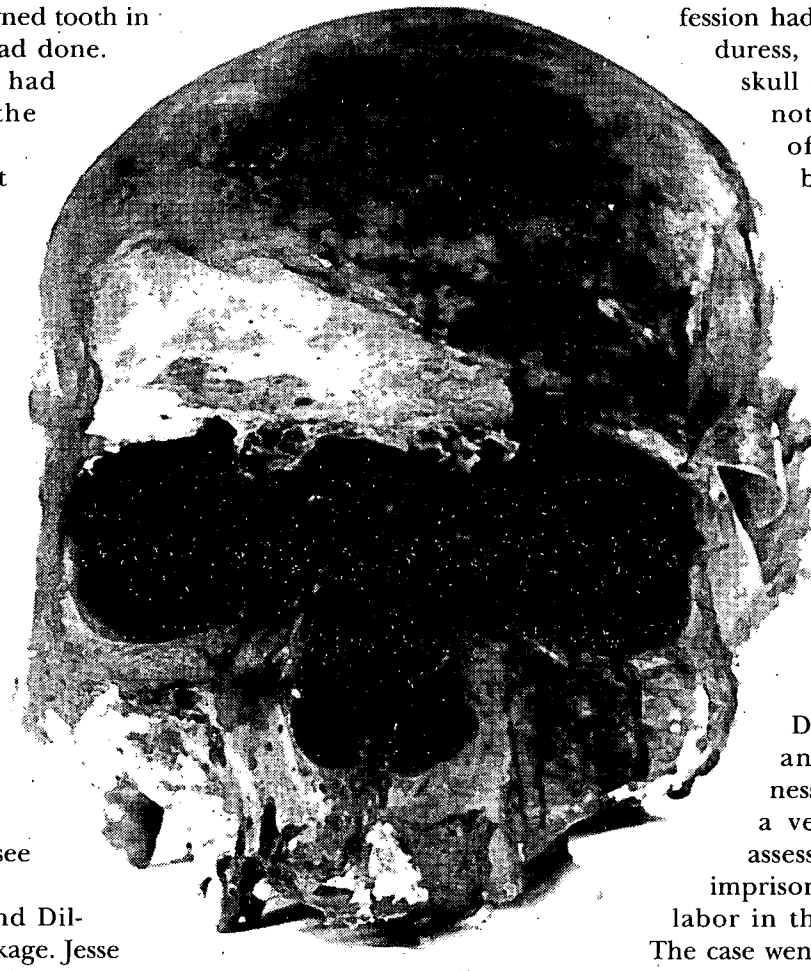
Jesse said, "I want to see it."

Correll, Maxwell, and Dillard brought in the package. Jesse stared at the bony, gold-toothed structure for a moment, then remarked, "I guess you've got me."

Correll advised him not to make any statements until he saw a lawyer. Jesse replied, "To hell with a lawyer. What good can a lawyer be to me?"

He then recited the sordid details of what had occurred the night of June 16, 1917, following Maggie's departure for Arkansas. He and Sexton had quarreled violently over his treatment of Maggie. He had purchased a .32 automatic pistol for five dollars at the Pittsburg picnic. In the middle of the night, he crept into the bedroom and shot Sexton twice.

"The first shot must have struck him in the body, because he raised up a little in bed," Jesse said. "The next shot struck him in the head, and he fell back and lay still. Just before daylight I put him in the smokehouse and locked the door. I dug the grave that day and that night I buried him. I buried him in his union suit, just the way he was sleeping."



Author's Collection

Staring at the victim's skull for a moment, the murder suspect remarked, "I guess you've got me."

Williams had scorched the bloodstains on the floor with a stove poker and burned the suit Sexton was supposed to have been wearing when he disappeared. The gun, he stated, he had kept in a bank box at Atoka until he was discharged from the army. The weapon had been stolen from him three months later in Burkburnett, Texas, and was never recovered.

Williams was transferred to jail at Atoka, where his confession was formally taken, signed, and witnessed. He soon changed his mind about an attorney. Request for a change of venue was denied, and he went on trial January 21, 1925, before District Judge J.H. Linebaugh, in Atoka County.

The defense maintained the confession had been obtained under duress, pressuring him with a skull about which he knew nothing; that the killing of Sexton was at the behest of Maggie DeGraff on the promise that he would receive one half of the farm, the crops, and a team of mules, but had "only got payment of $40"; that he was told later to haul some loose hay from the meadow and throw it over the grave, as someone might see it, and "I did that."

All of which was denied by Maggie DeGraff and refuted by an array of state witnesses. The jury rendered a verdict of guilty and assessed his punishment at imprisonment for life at hard labor in the state penitentiary. The case went to the state Criminal Court of Appeals. Finally, in August 1927, the appeals court "found no error in the record prejudicial to the defendant"; the judgment of the Atoka court was affirmed.

Shortly afterward, old Dickson Sexton died. But he went to his grave knowing that the murder of his son had been avenged.

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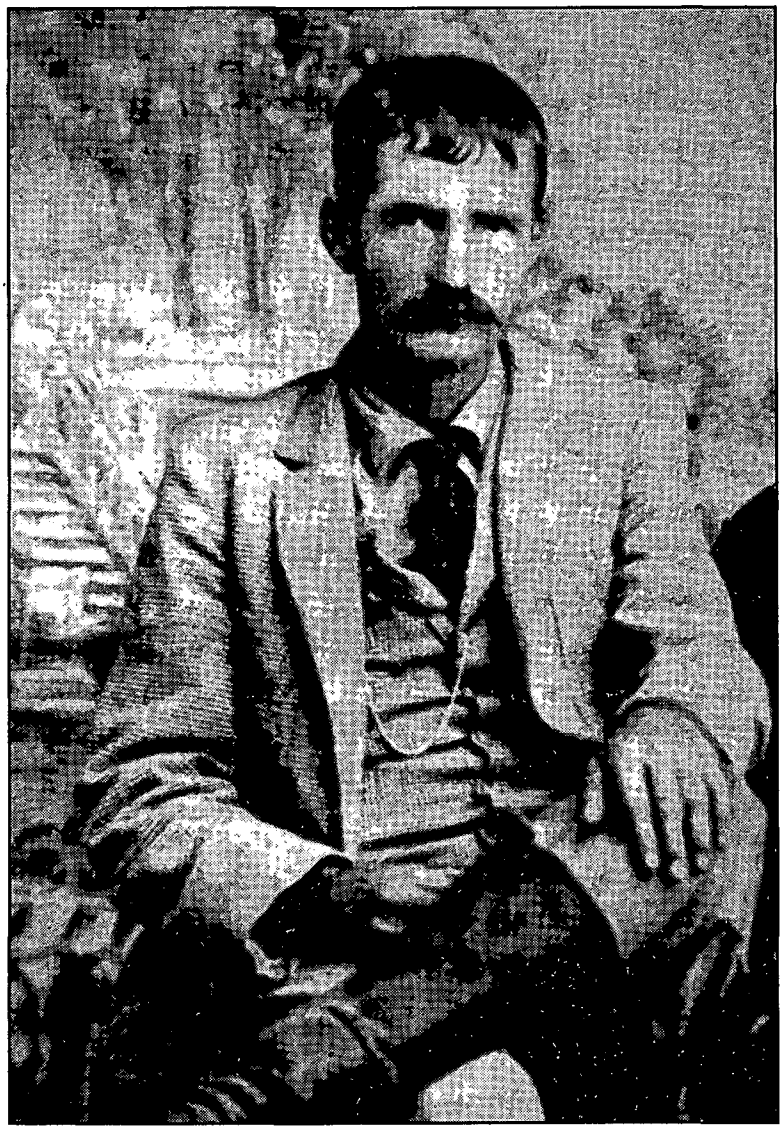
By the fall of 1900, the friendship of Sam Baker and Bob Gentry had begun to sour. Gentry was known to drink too much.

GUNFIGHT AT CHECOTAH

BY EDWARD HERRING

Checotah is located south of Chimney Mountain (now Summit), and almost on the site of an early battleground between the Creeks and the Little Osages in Indian Territory. On the north bank of the creek that skirts the northern boundary of the town, the Creeks annihilated a band of Osages that numbered about fifty. This baptism in blood was a prelude to white settlement. With the coming of the railroad, Checotah became one of the prominent shipping points in the territory. Like all young settlements, Checotah experienced more than its share of growing pains.

Sam Baker and his family moved to the Checotah area about 1894, eventually settling down in the area of Bond Switch. He immediately became acquainted with Robert J. Gentry, a member of a prominent family of Checotah and of the Creek Nation.



Author's Collection

Columbus Winfield "Sam" Baker, circa 1880.

Bob Gentry and Sam Baker were men forged from the same mold. Like many pioneers of the territory, they were fearless, independent, and quick with fist and gun. Besides having both served as city marshal of Checotah, they shared a common weakness for strong spirits and fast horses. Their boots had tread on both sides of the law. These similarities were perhaps the reason the two men first hit it off. They were also the essence of a clash of iron wills that would later be settled by cap and ball.

Bob Gentry was between one-quarter and one-eighth Creek Indian. He was the son of James and Caroline (Bush) Gentry of Calhoun County, Mississippi. The James Gentry family settled on the banks of the North Canadian River, near Eufaula, in 1855. Bob was born there a year later. A brother of Bob's, William E. Gentry, had served in the Second Creek Regiment of the Confederacy. William was long prominent in the business affairs of Checotah and the councils of the Creek Nation. Many landmarks of Checotah still bear the Gentry name.

One of the first race tracks at Checotah was a three-quarter straight track in the pasture of George W. Scott. During its heyday, when the liquor flowed freely, it was a wild place. Bob Gentry was no stranger to trouble and was a frequent visitor. The Muskogee *Phoenix* of November 19, 1894, reported one eventful day at the track when the whiskey had a particularly demoralizing effect on the crowd. "The day closed with two men shot, and one with his head decorated with gashes and bruises.... During the day Robert Gentry had a difference with a party, whose name we have not got, and belabored his head with the butt end of a quirt, making two or three large gashes in

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his head....The most serious trouble was the killing of Lee Arkins by Amos McIntosh."

Aside from his racing endeavors, Bob Gentry was active in farming and the cattle business, owning land in the Deep Fork bottom southwest of Checotah. Bob had filled several county offices, and was a member of the Light Horse Police of the Creek Nation. Gentry was proficient with a six-gun and soon earned the reputation of a dead shot. For a period of time, he served as a deputy marshal of Checotah. According to Glen Condon, an early day newsman in Tulsa, Gentry was credited with having killed seven men. Sam Baker was said to have killed seven or eight men himself.

Sam Baker was a feudist from Alabama by way of Texas. He was associated with the Brooks faction of the Brooks-Riddle feud that had kept the Dogtown Settlement on edge for a number of years. Baker had married Willis Brooks' youngest sister, Francis, in 1878. Sam had left his home state in 1884 with a murder indictment and assault charges against him.

Baker had backed the Brookses in a feud with a neighboring black family named Hubbard back in Lawrence County, Alabama. In a pitched gun battle, Sam had killed a black deputy named Phillips as he was about to shoot Baker's brother-in-law, Henry Brooks, in the back. Henry's brother, Gainum, was killed and Henry was seriously wounded. Baker and Henry Brooks quickly joined Henry's brother, Willis, in Texas. There, the three men quickly earned reputations as gunfighters and were a formidable trio.

Sam Baker and the Brookses were known to associate with several known criminals, including Little Dick West, the Jenningses, the Starrs, the Doolins, and many other desperate characters in the territory. In the front yard of the old Baker home place, east of Checotah, stood an old blackjack tree that many of the outlaws used for target practice.

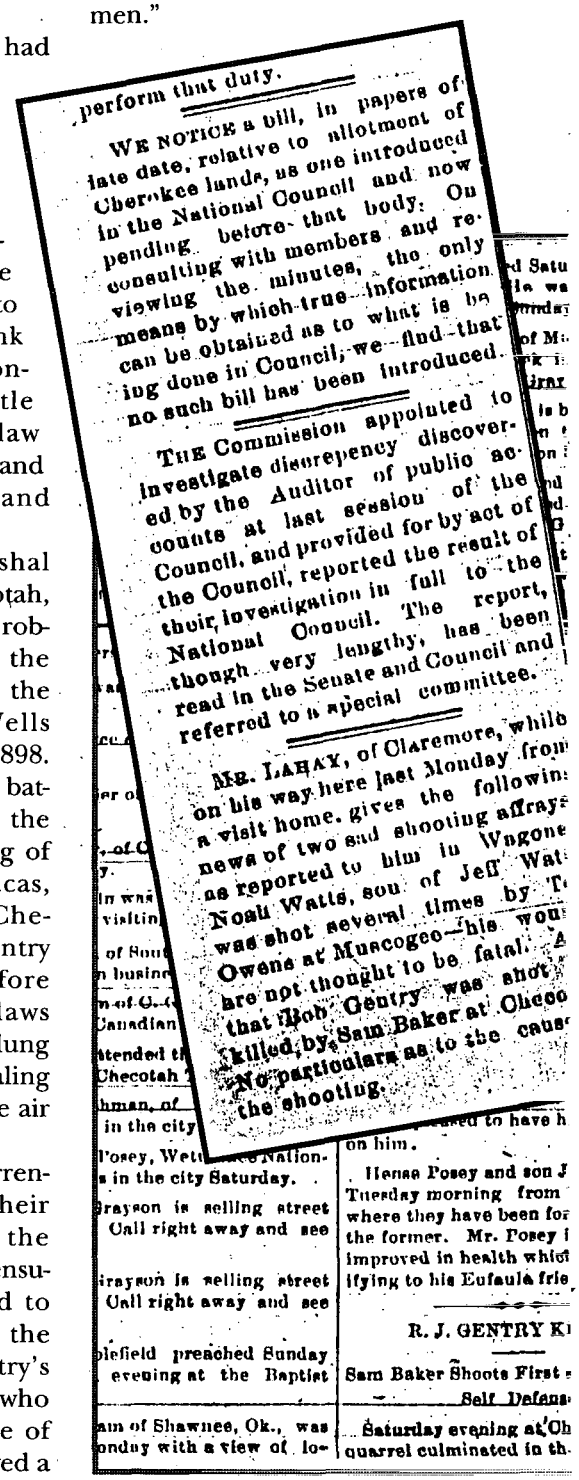
Baker was suspected of being involved in a couple of train robberies pulled by the Jennings Gang, and was once arrested for the robbery of a Texas and Pacific train near Gordon, Texas, in October of 1894. There was not enough evidence to bring a conviction.

Sam Baker and Bob Gentry had become good friends and frequently rode on posses together. The two had even worked with Deputy Marshal Bud Ledbetter in bringing in the Jennings Gang. In the summer of 1898, the outlaw, Mose Miller, and his gang, decided to rob the new First National Bank of Checotah. Miller's gang consisted of Will Nale and Little Henry Starr (cousin of outlaw Henry Starr), both Cherokees, and two white men, Andy Pettit and Charles Greathouse.

United States Deputy Marshal Frank Jones, stationed in Checotah, received a tip of the impending robbery. Jones was informed that the outlaws were to rendezvous at the farm of John Gordon on Wells Mountain on Monday, July 25, 1898. Jones did not want to risk a gun battle in town and decided to hit the outlaws first. A posse consisting of Jones, N.G. Turk, George Lucas, Billy Carr, Sam Baker, and Checotah Deputy Marshal Bob Gentry arrived at Gordon's place before sunrise and found the outlaws asleep in a draw. A heavy fog clung to the sides of the draw, concealing the posse, while down below, the air around the outlaws was clear.

Jones ordered the gang to surrender. The outlaws jumped to their feet and started shooting at the posse in the ghostly fog. In the ensuing gun battle, Jones claimed to have wounded Greathouse in the head. A bullet from Bob Gentry's gun found young Andy Pettit, who latter died of his wounds. One of the possemen, N.G. Turk, received a bullet in the suspenders. Miller, Nale, and Starr were forced to leave their horses behind but managed to escape in the fog.

By the fall of 1900, the friendship of Sam Baker and Bob Gentry had begun to sour. Gentry was known to drink too much. The Eufaula *Indian Journal,* November 16, 1900, said of Gentry, "When sober, he was a good and useful citizen. When under the influence of liquor, he was dangerous and had killed several men."


perform that duty.

WE NOTICE a bill, in papers of late date, relative to allotment of Cherokee lands, as one introduced in the National Council and now pending before that body. On consulting with members and reviewing the minutes, the only means by which true information can be obtained as to what is being done in Council, we find that no such bill has been introduced.

THE Commission appointed to investigate discrepency discovered by the Auditor of public accounts at last session of the Council, and provided for by act of the Council, reported the result of their investigation in full to the National Council. The report, though very lengthy, has been read in the Senate and Council and referred to a special committee.

MR. LAHAY, of Claremore, while on his way here last Monday from a visit home, gives the following news of two sad shooting affrays as reported to him in Wagone Noah Watts, son of Jeff Wat was shot several times by T Owens at Muscogee—his wou are not thought to be fatal. A that Bob Gentry was shot killed by Sam Baker at Checo No particulars as to the caus the shooting.

Posey, Wet... Nation- s in the city Saturday.

Grayson is selling street Call right away and see

Grayson is selling street Call right away and see

...lefield preached Sunday evening at the Baptist

...am of Shawnee, Ok., was ...onday with a view of lo-

...ed to have h on him.

Hense Posey and son J Tuesday morning from where they have been for the former. Mr. Posey i improved in health whic ifying to his Eufaula frie

R. J. GENTRY K

Sam Baker Shoots First Self Defens

Saturday evening at Ch quarrel culminated in th

The *Indian Journal* of Eufala, Oklahoma (b and Bob Gentry. The *Cherokee Advocate* (gunfight.

On a few occasions, Bob had gotten drunk and shot up the streets of Checotah. This would bring business to a complete halt. Frank Jones

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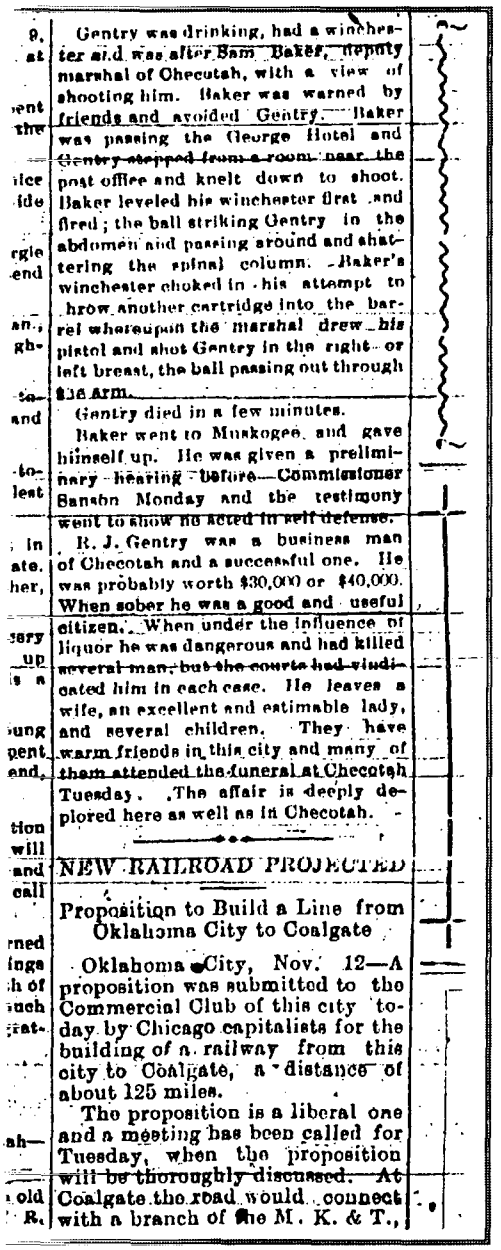
was the deputy United States marshal in Checotah, but never seemed to be around when Gentry went on one of his rampages. City officials soon tired of the situation. Because of his reputation with a six-gun, and despite his shady past, Sam Baker was hired as their city marshal.

On most occasions, when Baker found Gentry in a drunken state,



Gentry was drinking, had a winchester and was after Sam Baker, deputy marshal of Checotah, with a view of shooting him. Baker was warned by friends and avoided Gentry. Baker was passing the George Hotel and Gentry stepped from a room near the post office and knelt down to shoot. Baker leveled his winchester first and fired; the ball striking Gentry in the abdomen and passing around and shattering the spinal column. Baker's winchester choked in his attempt to throw another cartridge into the barrel whereupon the marshal drew his pistol and shot Gentry in the right or left breast, the ball passing out through the arm.

Gentry died in a few minutes.

Baker went to Muskogee and gave himself up. He was given a preliminary hearing before Commissioner Sanson Monday and the testimony went to show he acted in self defense.

R. J. Gentry was a business man of Checotah and a successful one. He was probably worth $30,000 or $40,000. When sober he was a good and useful citizen. When under the influence of liquor he was dangerous and had killed several men, but the courts had vindicated him in each case. He leaves a wife, an excellent and estimable lady, and several children. They have warm friends in this city and many of them attended the funeral at Checotah Tuesday. The affair is deeply deplored here as well as in Checotah.

NEW RAILROAD PROJECTED

Proposition to Build a Line from Oklahoma City to Coalgate

Oklahoma City, Nov. 12—A proposition was submitted to the Commercial Club of this city today by Chicago capitalists for the building of a railway from this city to Coalgate, a distance of about 125 miles.

The proposition is a liberal one and a meeting has been called for Tuesday, when the proposition will be thoroughly discussed. At Coalgate the road would connect with a branch of the M. K. & T.,

Author's Collection

detailed the gun battle between Sam Baker November 17, 1900, barely mentioned the

instead of depositing his friend in the city lockup, Sam would take him home to sleep it off. That changed when one day Mrs. Gentry paid Baker a visit. She implored of Baker not to bring Bob home if Sam were to find him drunk again, as Gentry had abused her severely. The next time Baker found Gentry drunk, instead of the customary ride home, Sam chucked his friend in the slammer. Gentry felt his dignity had been injured and made no secret of his sudden distaste of Sam Baker. Perhaps adding insult to the injury was the fact that Baker now wore the badge of the position coveted by Bob Gentry.

On November 11, 1900, things came to a head. It was Saturday and Sam Baker found Bob Gentry in town, drinking, and "raising cain and acting mean." Sam tried to get Bob to leave peaceably before any trouble started. Gentry became really belligerent so Baker told him in no uncertain terms that if he didn't straighten up, he was going to lock him up. Gentry cooled his heels but continued to hit the bottle.

It was nearly sundown and Sam Baker was just sitting down to supper with his family when someone came knocking on the door. A drunken Bob Gentry was up town and telling anyone who would listen that he was going to kill Sam Baker on sight. Baker rose from the table and went to the bedroom to get his Winchester. He told his boys to stay put and then headed up town to find Gentry. Unknown to Sam, his sixteen-year-old son, Bill Mite Baker, was following closely, in the shadows.

Jackson Thompson, a resident of Checotah for over forty years, said, "In the old days, they killed a man about every month on what was known as Front Street." Baker was walking down Front Street with his Winchester cradled in his left arm when he saw Gentry standing in the doorway of a bar and gambling house. Gentry waited for Baker with his Winchester ready.

"Drop your gun, Bob. Don't make me kill you!" Baker said, still advancing. Gentry was not about to back down or let Baker take him in. Dr. Claude W. Cain witnessed the shooting from his upstairs office in the W.E. Gentry building while young Bill Baker watched from the shadows, at the edge of the street. As Baker passed the George Hotel, Gentry knelt down to shoot. Sam leveled his rifle and took aim. At the Baker home, the family heard what sounded like two shots.

Gentry fired first. His bullet cut the shoulder of Baker's coat. Though a fraction of a second slower, Baker was used to making the first shot count. The ball struck Gentry in the abdomen and shattered his spinal column. Baker's rifle choked when he attempted to lever another shell in the chamber. Sam then drew his pistol and shot Gentry in the breast. Bob Gentry fell dead. His old pacing mare ran down the street, dragging the reins.

A contemporary account of the shooting in the Eufaula *Indian Journal* stated that Baker fired the first shot. Dr. Cain said that, "...Bob was a dead man by less than one hundredth of a second."

Sam Baker turned himself in to Deputy Marshal Frank Jones. "I want to give you my gun," said Baker. "I have killed Gentry." Baker went to Muskogee for a preliminary hearing before Commissioner Sanson the following Monday. Sam had plenty of witnesses who saw him shoot in self defense. No charges were brought against him.

Checotah newspapers had little to say about the unfortunate affair. Both men were well known and the press probably did not want to appear to be taking sides with one or the other. The blood of Bob Gentry would not be the last spilled on the streets of Checotah. Somewhere there was a bullet with Sam Baker's name on it, but it did not belong to Bob Gentry.

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Coal, Cattl

On the afternoon of June 21, 1901, the residents of the little coal mining town of Dolores, Texas, were surprised by an unscheduled arrival of a Rio Grande and Eagle Pass train from Laredo, thirty miles down river. They were further surprised to see a coach filled with armed men. The first man to step from the coach was Texas Ranger Captain John H. Rogers, who wasted no time explaining why the posse was there. As officer-in-charge, Rogers outlined his plan for cutting off the escape route of Gregorio Cortez, who was on the run after shooting two lawmen in central Texas. These shootings led to one of the greatest manhunts in Texas history. For eight days, Cortez had eluded his pursuers for more than three hundred miles across eight counties. It was only when he crossed the Nueces River near Cotulla that lawmen suspected that he was headed for sanctuary in Mexico.

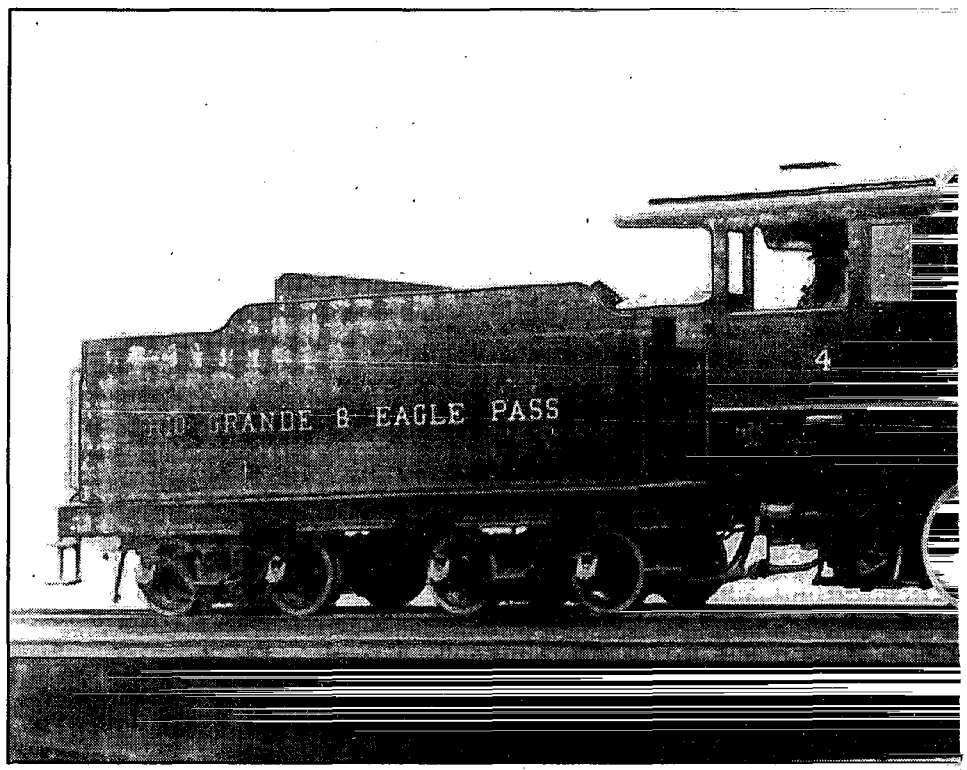
With his knowledge of the border country and anticipating Cortez's flight, Rogers concluded that he would attempt to cross the Rio Grande somewhere near the coal camps of Webb County. He sent his posse to guard the known river crossings while he and Bill Merriman, United States mounted customs inspector, secured horses from local rancher Jose Benavides, and rode off into the dense chaparral, headed for Las Tiendas Ranch several miles north of Dolores. Before daylight, Rogers was awakened by Jesus Gonzales, a herdsman from a nearby goat camp, who told of a tired, hungry stranger who walked into his camp during the night asking for food.

The man was fed frioles, cabrito, and tortillas before being given a place to sleep. Gonzales said the man, who carried a "morrel," or small bag, containing a pistol, was still asleep at his camp.

The two lawmen were led back to the goat camp where they arrested an exhausted Cortez without firing a shot. Ironically, no shots had been exchanged during the entire eight-day chase. The posse never got close enough.

Back in Dolores, the word of the capture spread quickly and the telegraph wires to Laredo crackled with the news. Rogers hustled his prisoner and posse back onto the train thus ending one of the more exciting two days in the early history of the community, plus the contribution made by the little, no-frills, nuts-and-bolts shortline railroad called the Rio Grande and Eagle Pass.

Originally, the railroad carried a more impressive name, the Rio Grande and Pecos Valley, because of the dream of one man, Alexander Cameron Hunt of Colorado. It was his vision to build a river-hugging railroad running from Brownsville, on the Gulf of Mexico, up the Rio Grande, through Laredo, Eagle Pass, Del Rio, and up the Pecos River before heading west to El Paso. With such a line, he could compete with other western railroad empires.



Rio Grande and Eagle Pass engine.

Born in New York in 1825, Hunt arrived in the West after President Andrew Johnson appointed him governor of Colorado Territory. After serving for only two years, he

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', & Onions

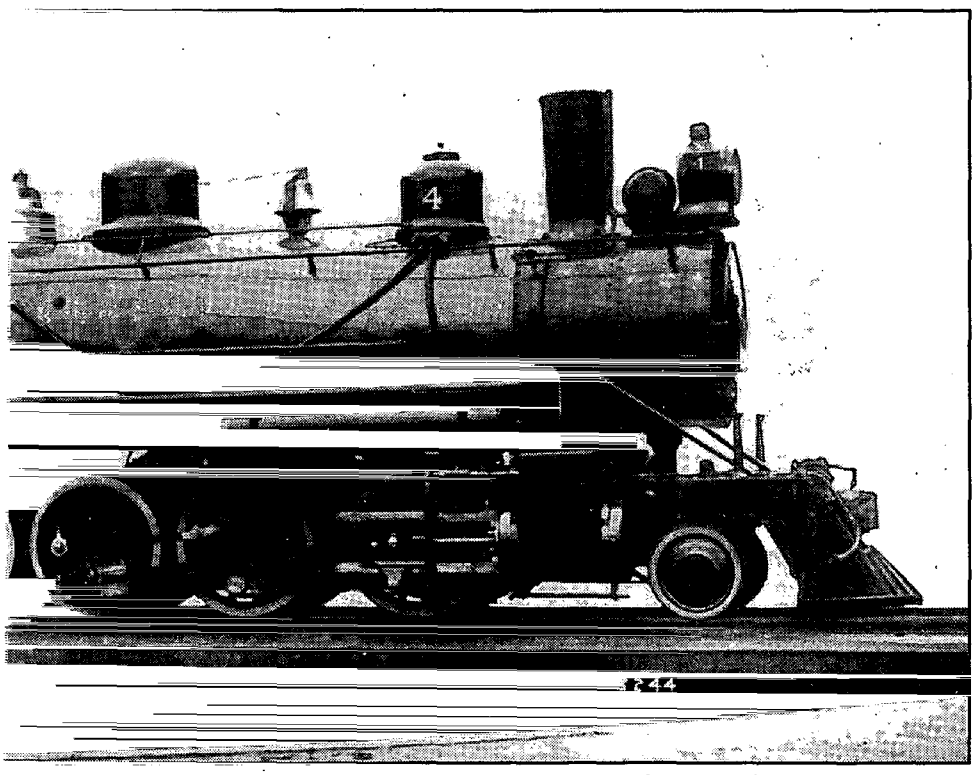
By Arthur Shoemaker

resigned, but remained in Denver, invested in railroads, and became wealthy.

He became interested in railroading prospects in Texas after he was appointed general manager of the Mexican National Railroad, which was building from Laredo, south to Monterey and Mexico City.

Ohio, but sold out and went to prospecting in Colorado and New Mexico. Hearing of likely strikes, he journeyed across northern Mexico, but without success.

Amid rumors of coal deposits in Webb County, Texas, Davis prospected in the gullies and washouts along the banks of the Rio Grande.



DeGolyer Library, Southern Methodist University

About this time, another man came on the scene and was to leave his mark in Webb County. He was David Darwin Davis, a Welshman, who was experienced in mining coal. A descendant of the English naturalist Charles Darwin, Davis was born in Cardiff, Wales, in 1825. In 1872, he immigrated to the United States and worked in the coal mining regions of Pennsylvania. He later owned and operated a coal mine in

A story is told of how he slipped one day, nearly landing in the river. Grabbing a small bush, he pulled it out by the routs exposing a rich vein of coal.

Setting up base at the small village of San Jose, Davis began searching along the creeks in the area. Hiring local men to work with him, he sank his first shaft about three miles northwest of San Jose where they hit a coal vein at sixteen feet.

As far back as the Civil War, it was known that coal deposits existed about twenty-five miles upriver from Laredo. It was cannel coal of bitumous rank of low moisture content that could be shipped in open cars for great distances without deterioration. It was later determined these were the largest bodies of cannel coal in the United States.

Learning of this mining activity, Hunt was determined to take advantage of it and made plans to begin his grand epoch, not on the Gulf Coast, but at Laredo. There was a great demand for coal. Every steam locomotive in Texas was fired with coal, as well as railroads and many factories in northern Mexico.

By March 1882, Hunt had a crew of 120 Mexican laborers clearing brush, leveling roadbed, making cuts and fills, and putting down piling for bridges. Two landowners secured injunctions against Hunt which he had to settle in court. A few were settled out of court, but finally, on May 24, 1882, Hunt hammered a silver spike into the first crosstie in front of a large gathering of Laredo civic leaders.

In their haste to put down rails, much of the roadbed was unstable which caused washouts from storms. One train, carrying construction material, hit a cow, derailing the locomotive and badly damaging four cars. At another time, the locomotive hit an ox cart, killing the oxen but sparing the lives of the two drivers. Fortunately, the engine remained on the tracks or the whole train would have toppled down the embankment.

The bridge over Santa Isabela Creek became a problem. Hunt claimed he lost $50,000 to subcontractors when rails and steel for the bridge were not delivered on time.

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Moreover, two steel workers were killed during construction.

Expenses mounted as Hunt worked with Davis to secure mining leases from landowners around San Jose. Hunt had earlier signed a contract with the International and Great Northern (later Missouri Pacific) to supply coal for all their locomotives operating in Texas.

As Hunt began his operations, Laredo was served by two other railroads. The International and Great Northern was standard gauge from the north, while the Texas-Mexican was narrow gauge coming in from Corpus Christi on the Gulf. The problem of handling cars from both lines was solved when Hunt had a third rail put down thus making the Rio Grande and Pecos Valley the only "three rail" railroad ever built in Texas. It remained so until the Texas-Mexican converted to standard gauge.

Santo Tomas mines.

Author's Collection

The pressure of completing the railroad and developing the mines, put a great financial strain on Hunt. A staggering blow came when the miners went on strike in 1885 for back wages. He was forced to declare bankruptcy, and the line went into receivership.

That same year, C.B. Wright of Philadelphia, who had been one of Hunt's largest financial backers, reorganized both the railroad and the mining company. Wright, who at the time was president of the Northern Pacific Railroad, purchased a thousand acres near the mines and changed the name of San Jose to Dolores in honor of his daughter. Familiar with the work of the Welshman Davis, Wright hired him to take over operation of all the mines. The miners were paid, new shafts were sunk, and additional tunnels exposed new veins of coal. Wright also changed the name of the railroad to the Rio Grande and Eagle Pass.

The mines were operating full blast with shafts at Minera, Dolores, Darwin, and Santo Tomas. Large power plants and loading towers quadrupled the tonnage shipped out on the Rio Grande and Eagle Pass. Much of the coal was routed through Nuevo Laredo and used by Mexican factories. Hundreds of carloads went to the port of Corpus Christi via the Texas-Mexican, called Tex-Mex by the local people.

To keep a stable work force, the mining company built frame houses for those workers who chose to live in Dolores. Many of the miners were family men from the small villages and towns of northern Mexico, where many of them gained experience from working the silver and coal mines of Durango and Zacatecas. Some lived in Colombia, across from Dolores and reached work on a hand-operated ferry.

Coal mining lacked the glamour of a western gold or silver strike. It was hard, dirty work and, therefore, failed to attract grifters and high rollers to the area. A deputy sheriff and town constable kept the peace, ocassionally asking United States customs officers for help. Lawbreakers were handcuffed to a stout chain fastened to the town water tower. Overnight on the chain took care of most of the drunks. Stabbings were rare; shootings even more so. Domestic disputes were common, but rarely violent.

Cattlemen and sheepmen welcomed the railroad and nearby loading pens. This saved long time-consuming cattle drives into Laredo to meet the Missouri Pacific. Cattle markets could be reached in half the time as before.

During the decade 1910 to 1920, the Mexican Revolution raged across northern Mexico, and in 1913, a large force, commanded by General Pablo Gonzales, occupied Colombia. They were loyal to Venustiano Carranza, one of the leaders in the revolution.

"I remember those times," said Pablo (Tiny) Vela. "My father was a car loader at the Dolores shaft. We boys would sit on the river bank and watch those soldiers march with their rifles and do drills. They had lots of bugle calls, too."

On the first day of January 1914, General Gonzales took his men downriver and attacked Nuevo Laredo. Fierce fighting went on for two days, until federal forces drove off the attackers. Three months later, the federal forces evacuated the city and General Gonzales marched in unopposed.

The only time the Rio Grande and Eagle Pass was ever used to transport American troops was in November 1916 when a battalion of

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the Third New Hampshire National Guard was sent to patrol the border and guard against revolutionary raiders from Mexico. A force of seventeen officers and 350 enlisted men camped at Dolores and Darwin. Their duty was to patrol the river and guard the Colombia crossing. The Rio Grande and Eagle Pass borrowed passenger cars from the Tex-Mex so the New Hampshire boys could ride to Laredo on their weekend passes.

After several months of border duty, the National Guard was withdrawn as Mexican troubles were cooling down and the war in Europe was heating up. In leaving, one New Hampshire soldier was heard to say, "And we never even got to see Pancho Villa."

On January 17, 1920, national prohibition went into effect in the United States and lasted until one minute after midnight, September 15, 1933. This law forbidding the manufacture, sale, and transportation of intoxicating liquor led to one of the most deadly and violent periods ever experienced in South Texas. It far exceeded the bandit raids of the Mexican Revolution.

To satisfy parched American throats, Mexican rumrunners, called "tequileros," crossed into Texas with packhorses loaded down with bags of tequila and whiskey. These tequileros were bold, heavily armed, and knew every mile of the brush country. Their goal was to rendezvous with dealers along some deserted stretch of highway. The profits were high, but so were the risks. These smugglers didn't hesitate to shoot their way out of trouble and gunfights with border lawmen were common.

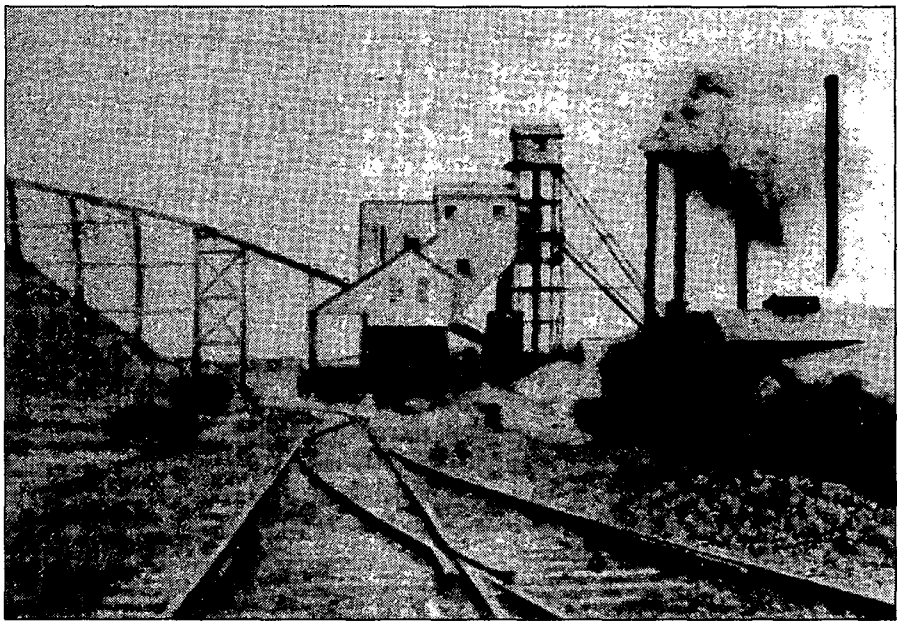
For some unexplained reason, it was strangely quiet up river from Laredo. A few reports of smuggling activity around Dolores would trickle in, but it was nothing compared to smuggling on the lower border.

"I think I know the reason," explained Juanitc Lopez in an interview shortly before his death in 1957. "Take the thirty miles of track between the mines and Laredo; trains going back and forth! Cattle trains being loaded! About that time, the railroad people bought hundreds of acres of land, cleared the brush and put in acres and acres of onions. I should know: I ran the Faria irrigation pump on the river which poured water into miles of irrigation ditches.

"Oh, the miners living in Colombia would bring over a few bottles now and then, sell it for pocket money. Nothing big, you know, everybody looked the other way. A few times, Custom officers rode the train in an effort to spot smugglers, but it was not necessary. It would have been hard to hide a packtrain in an onion field."

Onions became a freight bonanza for the railroad. By 1925, over fifteen hundred cars of onions were shipped annually. With plenty of irrigation water and mild winters, other vegetable crops were introduced, planted, harvested, and shipped across the country.

This couldn't have come at a better time. Railroads were switching from coal to oil for the operation of their steam locomotives. The coal veins at Dolores and Santo Tomas were depleted and many of the tunnels flooded. By the late 1900s, the population of Dolores dwindled to a dozen familes. The end came in 1942 when the roundhouse and station in Laredo were closed. Equipment was sold and the company dissolved. But one last gasp remained.



Author's Collection

Santo Tomas mines.

The prime contractor for building the Army Air Force Gunnery School at Laredo in World War II bought what remained of the Rio Grande and Eagle Pass, tore up the rails to Dolores, and built a spur to the construction site of the gunnery school. There they remain today.

Hunt's grand dream of a Brownsville-El Paso railroad never reached beyond the thirty miles or so northwest of Laredo. It never even got to Eagle Pass. It was never a glamour railroad that crossed great rivers or high mountain passes. It barely rates a footnote in railroad history, but the mundane business of hauling coal, cattle, and onions may have helped keep the peace along one small stretch of the Rio Grande.

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QUANAH PARKER: THE QUAH

A man born to two worlds, he could easily adjust to both but chose only one of them to abide by. The Comanches referred to him as Quanah which meant 'sweet smelling,' but his white enemies, the Texans, called him Parker. Cynthia Anna Parker was his mother, a white girl abducted from the Parker settlement in Texas, during a Comanche war raid on May 19, 1836. At the age of nine, she was adopted by the Comanches' Noconi band where she met and willingly became the wife of Chief Peta Nocona. Cynthia bore three children to Nocona, Quanah being the first around 1850, Pecos, his brother and Prairie Flower, his sister, following soon after.

Despite the fact Quanah owed half of his existence to the white race, he had no intention of following white ways, especially after Cynthia was recaptured against her will, along with Prairie Flower, by Texas Rangers in 1860 and returned to white relatives. Quanah's dislike for the lighter side soured to resentment when he found out in 1867 while attending the Medicine Lodge Treaty ceremonies, that mother and sister had died. His father was already dead from letting an infected wound go untreated in his grief over Cynthia's recapture. Also gone was Pecos, due to an illness.

The family that Quanah Parker cared so much for had all perished, leaving the tall half-blood to carve out a life on his own—and what a profound existence would he soon carve. Behind those chiseled features and blue-gray eyes dwelled the soul of a strong and intelligent man, determined more than ever to remain devoted to his native people. With the vow to one day seek revenge against the whites for causing the demise of his family, he became a member of the Quahada Comanche band that still roamed freely over the Staked Plains territory in west Texas. He put all of his energy into mastering excellent riding skills and handling traditional weaponry. The Comanches admired Quanah's physical adeptness and leadership abilities, making it easy for him to gain increasing importance in their clan until he became their chief.

Author's Collection

Quanah in full regalia.

Quanah's generation would be the last to experience freedom known for hundreds of years to his native people. It was a time of wrestling with white officials against submitting to reservation life, and under no circumstance was Quanah about to allow himself or his people to surrender to such degradation without a fight. He'd already stated his decision at the Medicine Lodge meeting in 1867 that he would rebel before succumbing to white men's wishes, a statement that riled peace commissioners and roused their perturbed suspicions that this half-blood meant what he said. True to his word, as time stalked by and reservation life closed in on the Indians, Quanah struck back, gathering his warriors together and whooping across the Southwest in a series of raids.

The Medicine Lodge Treaty hadn't been in vain. Although the Quahadas ignored the government's treaty terms, other Comanche bands had given in out of sheer weariness and agreed to reservation life. Only then—after living on a designated span of land and experiencing poor government rations of food and livestock stealing by intruding whites and eastern Indians—did the Comanches realize their mistake of signing. It wasn't long before they took to leaving the reservation during warm weather and mingling with the Quahadas to hunt buffalo and raid white settlements.

The government wouldn't stand for such rebellious behavior. In 1870, Ranald Slidell Mackenzie, a sharpened colonel of thirty years, was given command of the Fourth Cavalry and ordered to end all raid-

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DA COMANCHES' LAST CHIEF

By Spring de Leon

ing. It was the start of a broiling relationship between the army's best officer and the Quahadas' most fearless chief. Quanah became aware of how Mackenzie strategically assembled a large body of troops along the Staked Plains territory for an invasion in September 1871, but the chief keenly declined the army's readiness to fight. Instead, he had his warriors make quick attacks and then race off before the surprised troops could group together and follow in pursuit. To further heighten Mackenzie's anger, Quanah wildly sped his warriors through the colonel's camp in the dead of night on October 10 and scared the cavalry horses off with clanging cowbells and waving buffalo hides. Sixty-six choice mounts became new members of the Quahadas' ample group of horses, thus leaving Mackenzie enraged and Quanah minutely satisfied with the army's failure to take control of the Comanches.

By 1874, Quanah had grown more than concerned. Hide hunters were exterminating the buffalo at an alarming rate because of improvements to the Sharps rifle and buffalo tanning process. A base was established by the hunters near the empty trading post of Adobe Walls on the South Canadian River, and the Comanches watched their food supply fall to more and more riflemen. The Quahadas were the only Comanche band lucky enough to not yet be subjected to reservation life, and Quanah couldn't help but wonder to himself what the future held for his people. He recalled during the Medicine Lodge meetings that peace commissioners had sworn that whites wouldn't be allowed on the Indians' buffalo grounds in the Texas Panhandle. Now he saw the hypocrisy. The government did nothing to stop the slaughter, and certain high ranking officers went so far as to encourage the buffalo hunters to continue the killing with the assumption that depriving the Indians of a staple so important would force them to depend on reservation rations. But Quanah wasn't so easily swayed.

Angered that the hunters had migrated from Kansas to exhaust Texas' supply of the sacred buffalo, he put into effect a plan to raid the hide hunters colony at Adobe Walls. He created an alliance between five Plains tribes in order to accomplish the feat.

IN THE EARLY MORNING hours of June 27, Quanah and his mixed assortment of warriors silently approached Adobe Walls. Most of the whites lay sound asleep, and it seemed the attack would be successful. It's still a mystery whether a gunshot or loud crack of a ridgepole supporting the settlement's saloon was responsible for disturbing the night's silence, but a young Bat Masterson who would later gain fame, was among a select few who spotted the shadowed forms of the warriors stealthily advancing. In a matter of seconds, men were snatching up their guns and firing at the charging Indians. The Indians were no match for the Sharps rifles and they suffered a heavy casualty loss. Tired, and with a bullet keeping him company in his shoulder for his attack efforts, Quanah ended the siege on the third day and retreated.

After recovering from the fruitless assault, Quanah again reared into action and sped across the Staked Plains with his warriors as they torched settlements and dealt out death in a rouse to challenge Mackenzie to conquer the last of the free Comanches. Mackenzie was no fool. By now, he knew from prior experience how the Comanches liked to provoke fights while they were at their strongest and most defensively positioned. It was just a matter of biding time until the opportunity presented itself when he could squelch the Quahada band responsible for Indian resistance.

Mackenzie soon saw his chance. On September 28, 1874, he discovered the Comanches along with the Kiowas and Cheyennes encamped in the great Palo Duro Canyon in the Texas Panhandle. The canyon had been a source of protective shelter and excellent grazing and water for years to the Indians, but time and exhaustion had finally caught up with them. The troops dismounted and quietly made their way down the slope, their rifle fire taking the warriors by surprise. Bullets flew thick and rendered the Indians helpless as they scrambled frantically and watched their camp being destroyed. If that wasn't enough to anger the unprepared Indians, Mackenzie let his scouts pick out Comanche horses for themselves and then ordered the rest of the animals shot, slaying around one thousand.

Quanah hadn't been there to witness the destruction, but he saw how the loss of the horses weakened the Comanches and Kiowas as they slowly surrendered in small clusters to the reservation. The coming winter proved a hard one, but Quanah's stubborn pride wouldn't let up. He and four hundred of his people still had a sufficient number of horses. They endured the cold season until warmer weather made hunting easier for them. With Mackenzie constantly chasing their path, the Quahadas didn't have enough time to hunt and were starving. In April 1875, the first of the Quahadas staggered into the reservation, unable to continue coping with constant hunger and inadequate clothing. The price to maintain a freedom once enjoyed was no longer worth it.

Two months later, on June 2, Quanah brought his remaining people to Fort Sill where a perceptive Ranald Mackenzie awaited.

Trading in his warriorship for a more moderate reservation lifestyle

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greatly challenged the Quahada chief's patience. It annoyed him to be dependent on a government that could never keep a punctual schedule when it came time to distribute food rations to the Comanches. In 1878, he and his tribe were allowed time off the reservation to hunt buffalo, but none were found, having been replaced by numerous herds of longhorns instead. Almost immediately, Quanah recognized potential. In order for the cattle to get to Kansas railroad towns and be shipped East, they had to be driven on trails through Indian Territory. So with this new-found opportunity, he put to good use negotiating skills he had used frequently as chief and insisted the cattlemen pay one dollar per head for crossing through reservation lands. The money collected piled to a pleasing amount and served as an investment for the tribe's own herd of cattle.

Shortly thereafter, Quanah decided to take time to acknowledge his white side and visit his mother's family in East Texas, caring not that he was going dressed in native attire and barely speaking English. He set out bearing a letter from the reservation agent: "This young man is the son of Cynthia Anna Parker, and he is going to visit his mother's people. Please show him the road and help him as you can." With help from a map drawn for him by a stranger, he arrived at his destination where Cynthia Ann's Uncle Silas and relatives lived. They still viewed him as a full-blooded warrior, but nevertheless, respected him. He stayed with the Parkers for a spell, improved his English, and learned farming and cultivation techniques.

Having gained the Parkers' acceptance as well as valuable agricultural knowledge, he returned to the reservation and dedicated his time to bettering the Comanches' welfare. He turned into a proficient businessman and established grazing rights terms with cattlemen, dealing with the likes of Charles Goodnight, Dan Waggoner, and Burk Burnett. Leasing thousands of acres from the Comanche-Kiowas' three-million-acre reservation to stockmen raked in up to $200,000 annually. Quanah's knack for business and friendly affiliation with the cattlemen won him honors, wealth, and a ranch house near the town of Cache, Oklahoma.

He flexed his business skills to maximum span and made several trips to Washington to have the grass leases approved by the commissioner of Indian affairs and lobby in Congress for Indian land right purposes. Everything he did, he did for his people. He knew their lack of English and of white men's ways made them poor candidates to properly deal with whites. He did his best to fight for their rights so they could maintain some degree of dignity and not be taken advantage of by having their land size reduced by greedy settlers. But in October 1892, despite Quanah's tireless efforts, the Indians were influenced to sign an agreement to give up their three-million-acre reservation. They were left with 551,681 acres of tribal land. Each Indian would receive 160 acres, along with a portion of a two million dollar cash payment.

Author's Collection

Quanah Parker, circa 1880.

But Quanah's capabilities stretched even further than negotiator and tribal financier. He found time in his busy life to serve as deputy sheriff of Lawton, Oklahoma, and later stepped up the law's authoritative ladder as judge of a three-man court of Indian offenses. It surprised some people how brusque he could be in both public and personal dealings, but Quanah was a no-nonsense individual who always spoke with realistic tactfulness.

During the course of his life, Quanah took eight wives, much to the disapproval of white officials. Before he died in February 1911, he brought the bodies of his mother and sister from Texas and laid them to rest near his home. His mother had always been dear to him, and he wanted to be placed beside her when it came time for him to cross over into the Spirit World.

Quanah Parker had earned respect from both sides of his heritage and was widely known for the important details that filled his prosperous life. He fathered twenty-five children and was honored to have a town and railroad named after him. His affiliation with the wealthy and famous drew hearty acceptance from them—including President Theodore Roosevelt, with whom he often associated. Some said he was the wealthiest Indian in the United States, and everyone agreed that no Comanche could compete with Quanah's achievements and therefore would never carry the title of chief after him.

Of his mother, Quanah said, "If she can learn the ways of the Indian, I can learn the ways of the white man." Indeed, he made an impressive adaptation to white ways, but he never became a white man's Indian and remained true Comanche to the very end. He no longer wildly raced across the Staked Plains like a demon on horseback, but in his heart, up to the day he was buried in full Comanche chief finery beside Cynthia Ann, he always thought of himself as a warrior.

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The Sundance Kid

BY DONNA B. ERNST

Spring, 1867—Harry A. Longabaugh is born to Josiah and Annie (Place) Longabaugh in Upper Providence Township, about thirty miles northwest of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. He is the youngest of five children in a poor but strongly religious family.

August 30, 1882—Soon after his oldest brother, Elwood, leaves home to become a whaler out of San Francisco, young Harry travels west by covered wagon with his cousin George Longenbaugh. The Longenbaugh family homesteads in Durango and Cortez, Colorado; Harry's future partner, Butch Cassidy, is living just a few miles away in Telluride, Colorado. By 1886, however, Harry grows restless and heads north, where he works for the N-N Ranch near Culbertson, Montana.

February 27, 1887—Out of work and money, Harry steals a horse, gun, and saddle outfit from an employee of the VVV Ranch in Sundance, Wyoming. After a four-month chase, Sheriff James Ryan finally captures him in Miles City, Montana, and returns him to Sundance for trial. On August 5, 1887, Harry pleads guilty to horse stealing and is sentenced to eighteen months, which he serves in the Sundance town jail. On February 4, 1889, Governor Thomas Moonlight grants a pardon to Harry, and he is released the next day from jail. Harry A. Longabaugh leaves town, taking with him a new name, "The Sundance Kid."

Author's photo

Sundance, Etta Place, and Butch Cassidy (left to right) at the Cholila Ranch in Argentina, in 1903.

1890 - 1892—During this two-and-a-half-year time period, Sundance works breaking horses on the Bar U Ranch near Calgary, Canada; he is recorded at the Bar U during the Canadian Dominion Census on April 6, 1891; he is arrested and immediately released for "cruelty to animals" on August 7, 1891; he serves as the best man at his friend Ebb Johnson's wedding; saves the life of his friend Fred Ings in a blizzard during a cattle roundup; and enters into business at the Grand Cen-tral Hotel Saloon in Calgary.

November 29, 1892—Three outlaws hold up the Great Northern westbound train #23 just outside Malta, Montana. Bill Madden and Harry Bass are captured and imprisoned, and they implicate The Sundance Kid, who escapes, as being the third outlaw.

1897 - 1900—Periodically, Sundance (alias Harry Alonzo), lives and works for various ranchers around Baggs and Dixon, Wyoming, along the Little Snake River. He develops close and long-lasting friendships with a number of the local citizens, as well as with the outlaws who use a nearby Powder Springs hideout. The area is later used by Sundance as a safe haven when he is on the run.

June 28, 1897 —Sundance and four others rob the Butte County Bank in Belle Fourche, South Dakota, and net just $97. By September a posse trails them to Lavina, Montana, where a shootout results in the capture of the gang. The outlaws, Sundance, Harvey Logan, and Wait Punteney, are taken to the Lawrence County jail in Deadwood, South Dakota. However, they escape on October 31, 1897, and Sundance heads for the Little Snake River Valley, where he is always well received.

June 2, 1899 — In traditional Wild Bunch fashion, six outlaws, including Sundance, stop the Union Pacific Overland Flyer #1 just past the old Wilcox station house. They detach the passenger cars, dynamite the bridge, and blow open the safe, netting about $3,400 and some jewelry. Sheriff Josiah Hazen leads the posse which corners the gang near Horse Ranch, Wyoming; but during the ensuing shootout, Hazen is killed and the outlaws escape.

September 19, 1900 — Sundance, Kid Curry, Will

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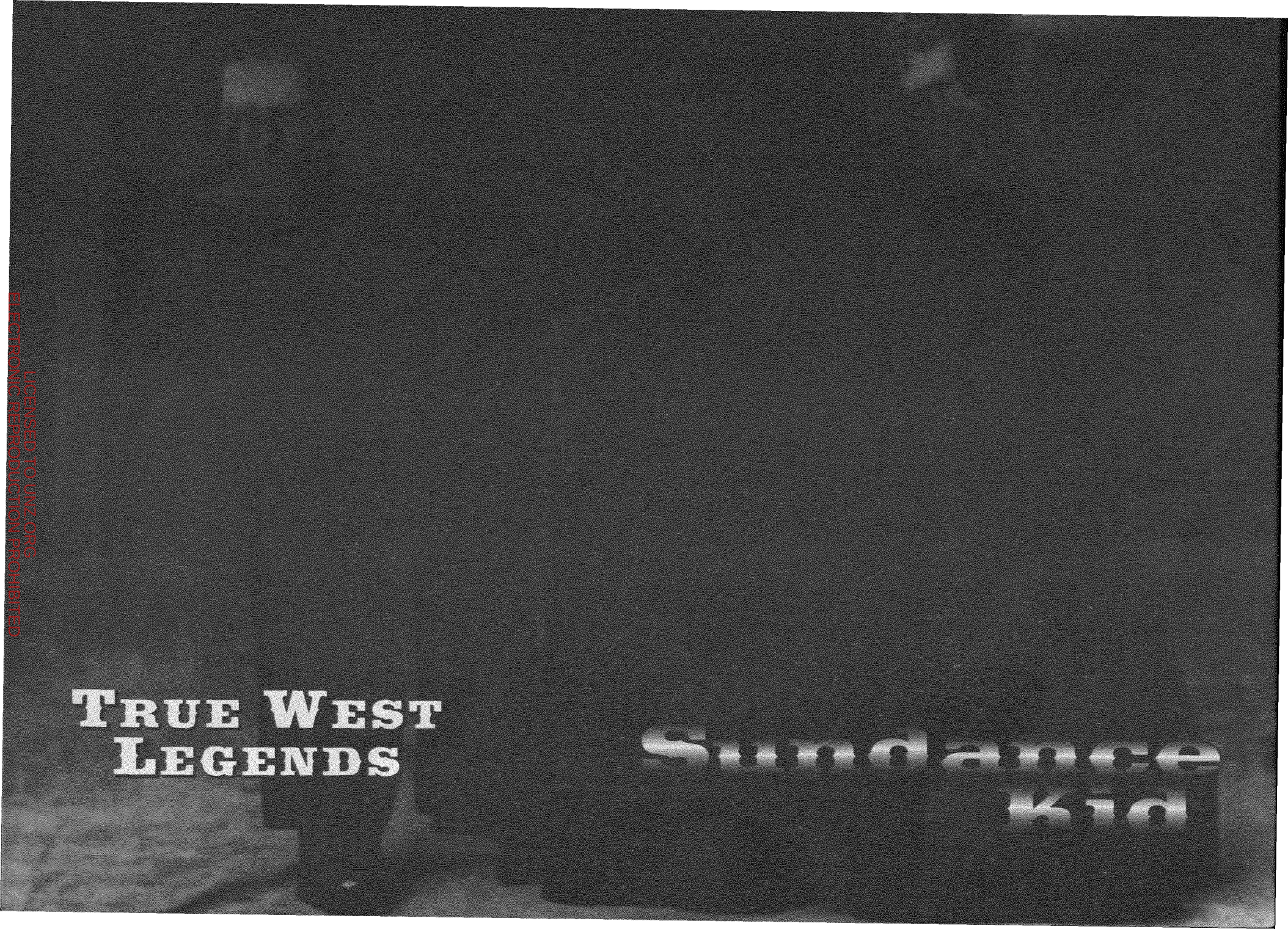
TRUE WEST
LEGENDS
Sundance
Kid

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What To Read

Digging up Butch and Sundance, by Anne Meadows. (reprint: University of Nebraska Press, 1996)
Sundance, My Uncle' by Donna B. Ernst.
(The Early West Publications, 1992)
The Rise & Fall of the Sundance Kid, by Edward Kirby.
(Western Publications, 1983)
The Outlaw Trail: The Story of Butch Cassidy and the Wild Bunch, by Charles Kelly.
(reprint: University of Nebraska Press, 1996)

Carver, and possibly Butch Cassidy holdup the Winnemucca National Bank in Winnemucca, Nevada. Sundance's share of the stolen $32,640 is going to be his spending capital for a new life in South America.

November 21, 1900 — The Wild Bunch gathers in Fort Worth, Texas, for a last hurrah, and foolishly they have their photo taken at the John Swartz Studio. The picture of Sundance, William R. Carver (Will Casey), Ben Kilpatrick (The Tall Texan), Harvey Logan (Kid Curry), and Robert Leroy Parker (Butch Cassidy) soon lands in the hands of the law, thus enabling an identification of the Wild Bunch members. The Pinkerton Detective Agency, United States marshals, local sheriffs, and Wells, Fargo & Company detectives are all on the alert for this band of outlaws.

Winter 1901 — Shortly after the Fort Worth Five photograph is taken, the gang splits up. Sundance reunites with his girlfriend, Ethel, and takes her to meet his family in Pennsylvania. It is his first trip home since he went west as a teenager. His parents have both died, but he and Ethel visit with his brother, Harvey, and his sisters, Samanna and Emma. When he leaves, he promises to keep in touch with Samanna once he has a home address in Argentina. Sundance and Ethel head to Buffalo, New York, where he enters Dr. Pierce's Invalid's Hotel for treatment, possibly for a gunshot wound to his left leg. On February 1, 1901, he and Ethel register as Mr. and Mrs. Harry A. Place at Mrs. Taylor's boarding house in New York City. Butch joins them, registering as Mrs. Place's brother, James Ryan. While in New York City, Sundance and Ethel purchase a lapel watch and a stickpin at Tiffany's Jewelers and have their picture taken at the De Young Photography Studio on Broadway. Sundance mails a copy of the photo back to friends in Wyoming with a letter explaining that this is his wife Ethel who he knew from a previous trip to Texas. Then on February 20, 1901, the trio sails out of New York aboard the ship *Herminius* bound for Buenos Aires, Argentina.

1902 - 1908 — Sundance, Ethel, and Butch live peaceably on a small ranch in Cholila, Argentina, for about three years before the long arm of the law finally finds them again. Ethel returns home to the states and disappears around 1905 or 1906, and Sundance and Butch return to their old outlaw ways. They holdup banks, trains, and mine payrolls and become as infamous in South America as they had been earlier in the United States. Finally, on November 4, 1908, they hold up the Aramayo, Francke & Cia payroll near Tupiza, Bolivia. They escape into the mountains with about 15,000 bolivianos and the mining company pack mule. As they arrive in San Vicente, Bolivia, two days later, someone recognizes the mule and alerts the town mayor, who gathers a couple of armed townsmen to help. Both Sundance and Butch are wounded during the short gunfight, and they opt to commit suicide rather than be captured and jailed. The next day the two unidentified *bandidos yanqui* are buried in the local cemetery.

Where To Go

Crook County Museum, Sundance, Wyoming. Longabaugh spent eighteen months jailed in this small town which lent its name for his alias. The museum displays the courtroom furniture and his indictment papers.

Outlaw Trails, Inc., Robbers Roost Ranch, Hanksville, Utah. Tour the rugged back country where Sundance roamed in southeastern Utah, including Robbers Roost Canyon. For more information call (801) 542-4321 or (801) 542-3221.

Cholila, Argentina. The ranch house built in the Andes foothills by Sundance and Butch still stands.

San Vicente, Bolivia. The small mining town sits high in the Andes Mountains. The tiny town cemetery holds the bodies of the Aramayo bandits although the grave sites are unmarked.

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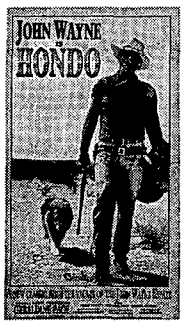

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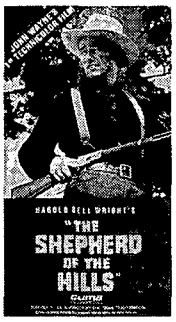

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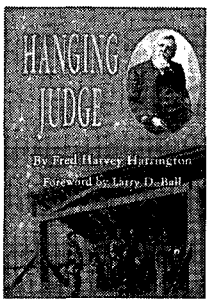

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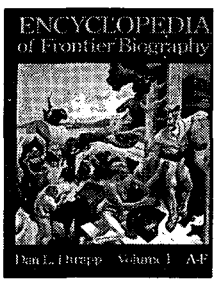

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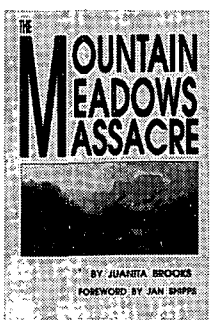

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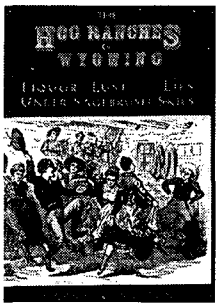

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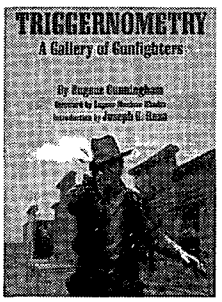

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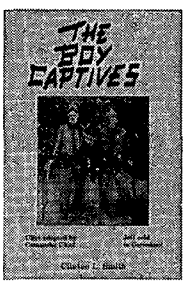

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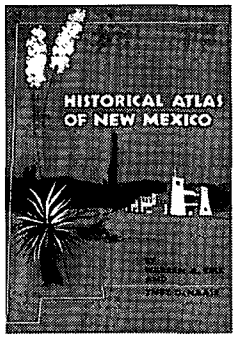

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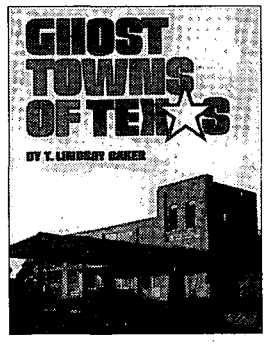

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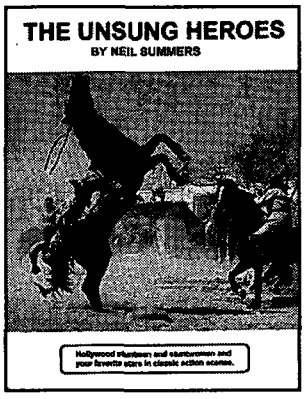

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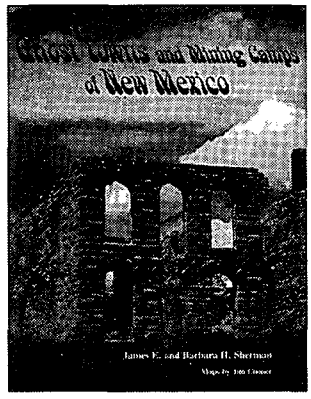

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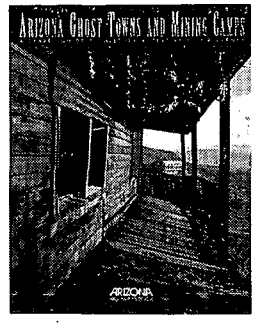

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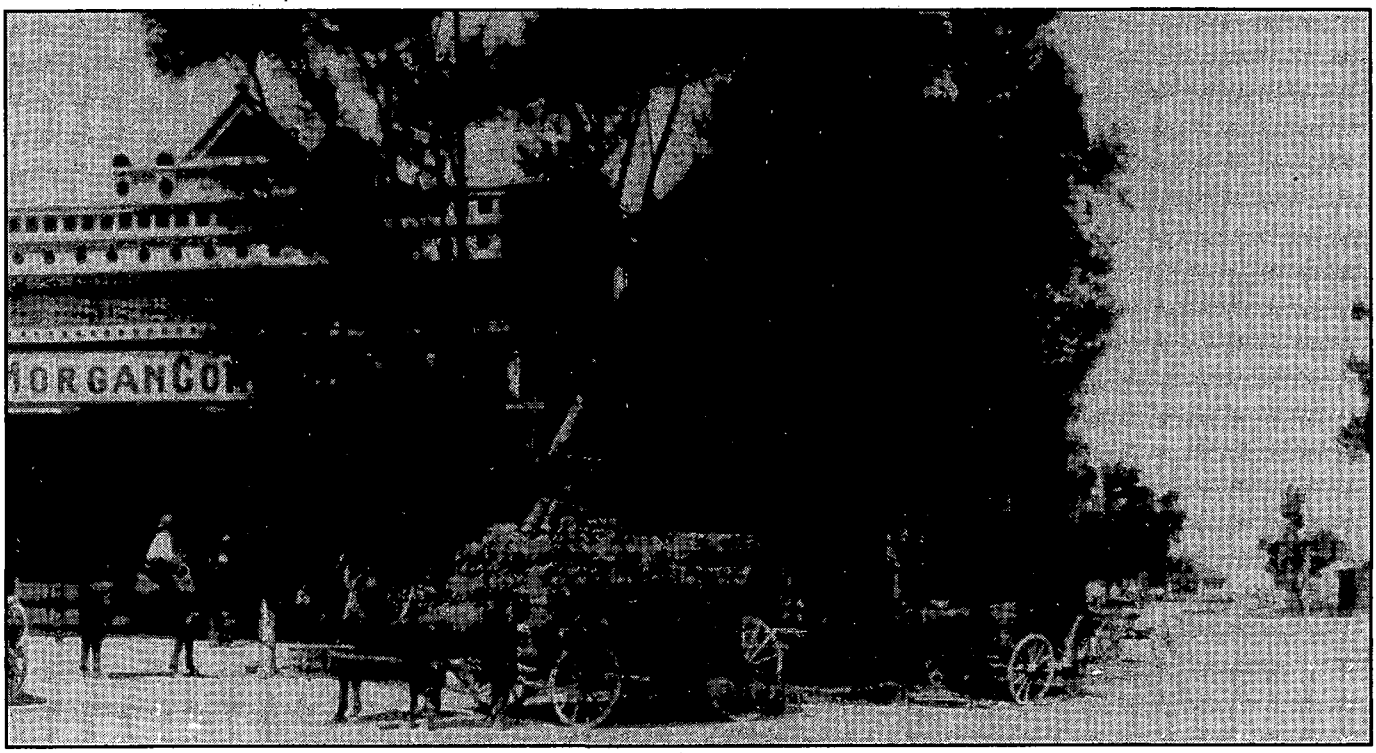

Courtesy Dick Seidel

Alfalfa wagons in front of the Norton-Morgan Commercial Company, 1890.

The Willcox Commercial Company

BY PHYLLIS DE LA GARZA

The Willcox Commercial Company in Willcox, Arizona, is the oldest commercial building in the state still in use for the purpose for which it was built in the early 1880s.

In 1880 Willcox was an important station on the Southern Pacific's new road. The town ranked second to Tombstone in the amount of business transacted in Cochise County. John W. Norton, the post trader at Fort Grant, Arizona, formed a partnership with M.W. Stewart, thus calling their enterprise, "Norton, Stewart & Company." In Willcox they built a warehouse along with stables, corral, and feed yard. The new store was located at the corner of Stewart Street and Railroad Avenue, stocked with hardware, machinery, and agricultural implements as well as groceries.

From this location Norton and Stewart also did business as forwarding and commission merchants. Freight was shipped to Forts Grant, Thomas, Apache, Bowie, and Rucker, as well as Dos Cabezas, Pueblo Viejo, Globe, San Carlos, Mazey, Eureka Springs, and Aravaipa.

Norton and Stewart also ran a stage line from their store, servicing Willcox via Fort Grant to Camp Thomas. The six-horse coaches ran every other day to these points, the fare to Globe, a distance of 128 miles, was $20. The line ran coaches from Willcox to Globe making eight changes between the two towns. After December 1881, a new service was added that included buckboards leaving Willcox Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays at 6 AM.

Four years after forming their partnership, Norton and Stewart went their separate ways. Norton's new partner was Henry E. Morgan, thus the Norton-Morgan Company came into existence. The business suffered a setback in 1884 when the quartermaster at Fort Grant awarded the contract for government freighting to Solomon and Wickersham of Bowie, Arizona, even though Willcox merchants had bid $1,500 less. But by 1885 Norton and Morgan regained the contract. As many as forty-five wagons and fifty teams averaging ten to twenty mules each, hauled from two to

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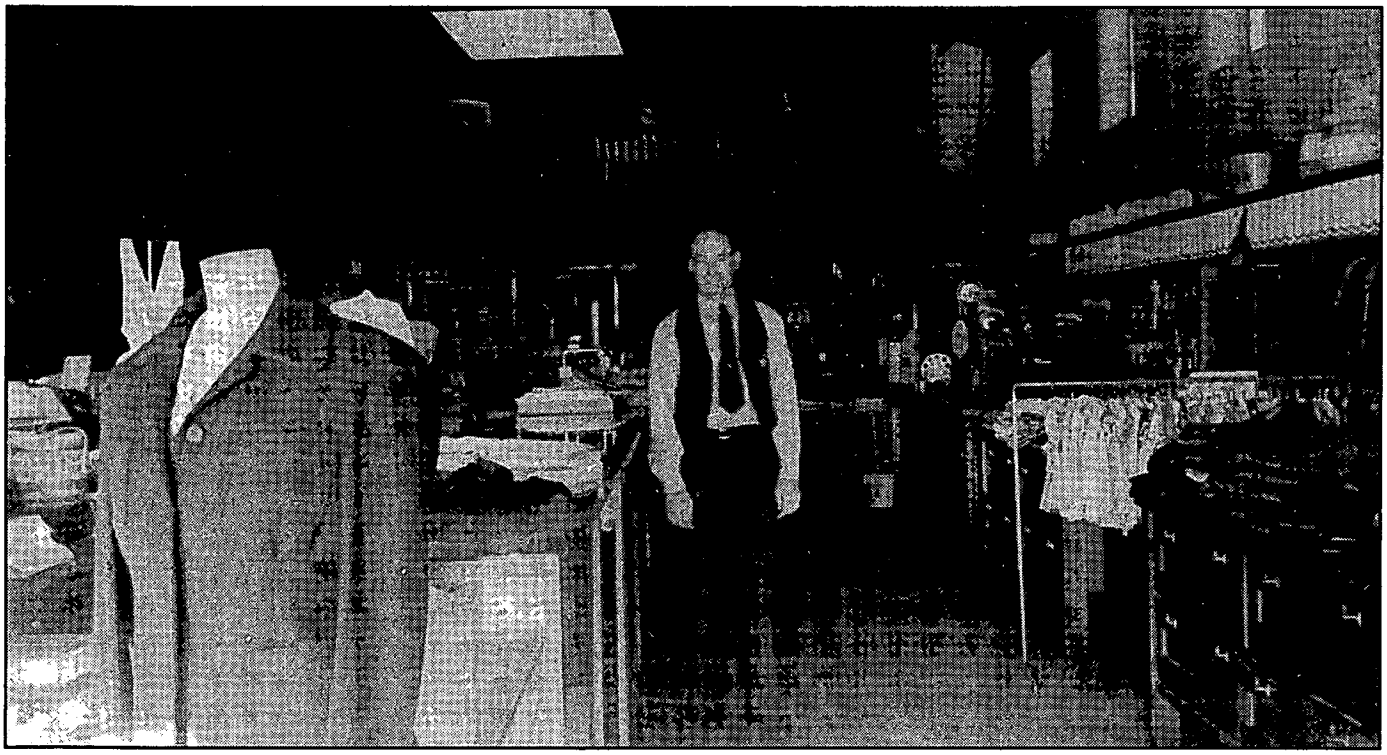

Courtesy Dick Seidel

Lynn Camp inside the Willcox Commercial Company, 1936.

four wagons to points throughout Arizona Territory. One round trip from Willcox to Globe, Arizona, could be made in twenty to thirty days when the roads were in good condition.

The Norton-Morgan Company building was situated on 10,000 square feet of property. The building alone took up about 8,000 square feet, and was constructed of four-foot thick adobe walls and eighteen-foot high ceilings. Wainscoting, pressed tin ceilings, and hardwood floors were installed, beginning in the 1800s. Tile flooring was later added over some of the hardwood portion. Original store lighting was done through the use of carbide lamps. Grocery ladders ran on tracks around the walls. (They have since been removed.) By the turn of the century, the wide, covered store front was used by citizens for annual gatherings, such as September's "Watermelon Day."

Early pioneers traveled as much as sixty-five miles over cattle trails to do their shopping at the Willcox store. People paid seven to eight dollars for one hundred pounds of flour and forty cents a pound for green coffee. It is said even Geronimo once bought sugar here.

A sitting room at the back of the store was complete with comfortable furniture, including a "fainting couch" where ranchers' wives could rest after shopping while their men attended to other business around town.

The Norton-Morgan Company flourished for many years, and at the height of operations employed six people in the office as well as sixteen clerks in the store. By 1923 however, the business was forced into bankruptcy during a business recession following World War I. Too, rumors circulated concerning Norton and Morgan having invested money in some unprofitable land and cattle operations in the Willcox area. A receiver was appointed by the Superior Court on November 20, 1923, upon petition of the Willcox Bank and Trust Company.

Mr. and Mrs. Guy Holt bought the store in 1924. They sold groceries, hardware, and dry goods, but changed the name of the store to the "'Willcox Commercial Company." The Holts continued operating the store until 1936 when they retired, selling their interest to their daughter, Edith, and her husband, Lynn Camp. The Camps had been working with Holts in the store since 1924. The younger couple lived in the large apartment above the store. Edith's uncle, Guy J. Holt, worked one side of the store selling groceries, while the Camps sold dry goods on the other side.

Retiring in 1974, the Camps sold the entire operation to Dick and Leona Seidel who have continued the tradition. The store to this day remains a commercial company selling dry goods; however, the grocery and hardware line has been discontinued. Listed on the National Register of Historic Places, the Willcox Commercial Company still contains its original safe and antique cash register. It underwent some historically accurate renovation in 1989.

Located in what is now considered the "historic" part of town, the Willcox Commercial Company's doors are still open Monday through Saturday. There are no more cracker barrels or dynamite, but the store has stood the test of time.

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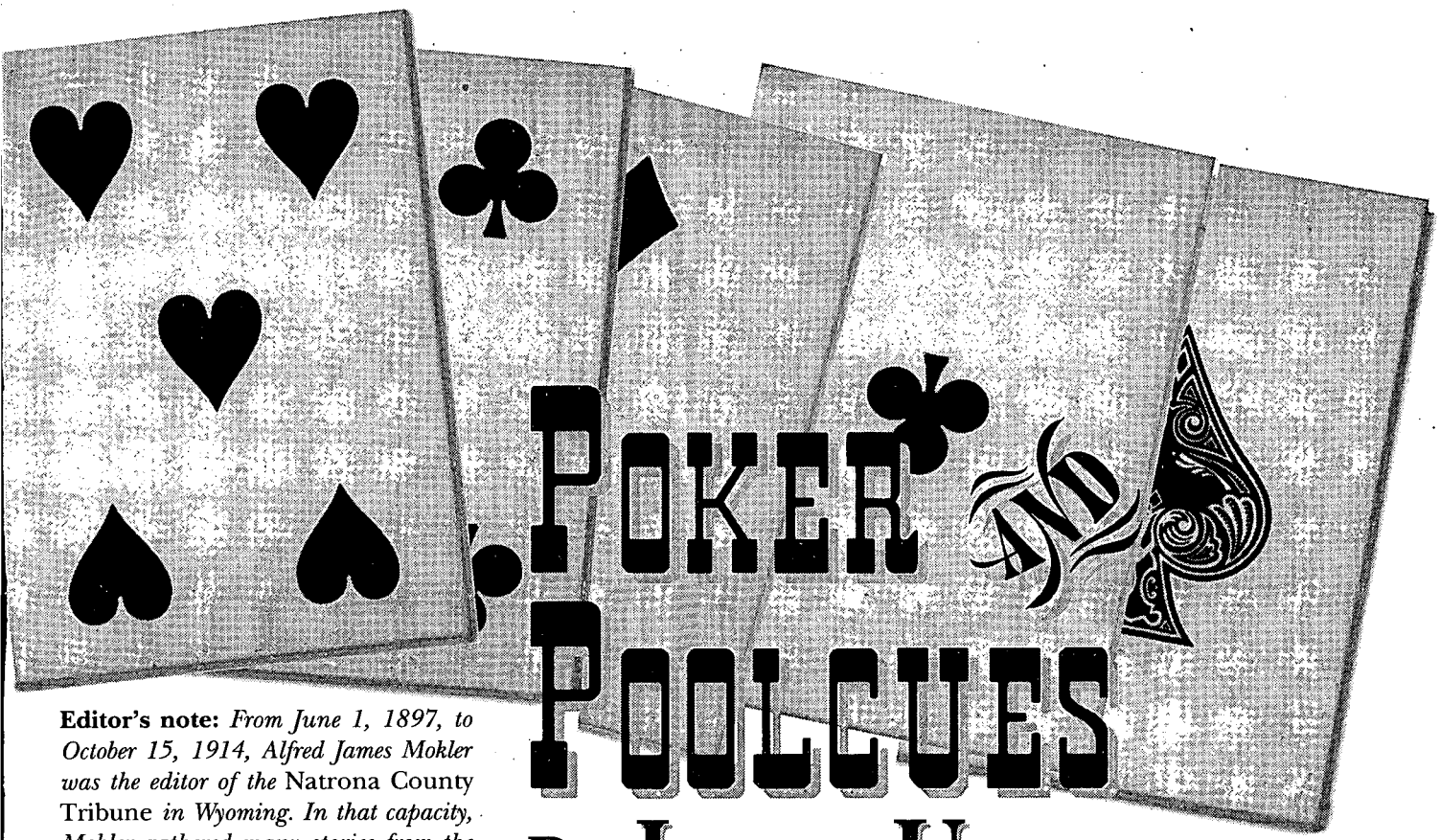

Poker and Poolcues

By Larry Underwood

Editor's note: *From June 1, 1897, to October 15, 1914, Alfred James Mokler was the editor of the* Natrona County Tribune *in Wyoming. In that capacity, Mokler gathered many stories from the "wild and woolly" West. In 1923, the stories were collected and published as the* History of Natrona County Wyoming: 1888-1922. *One of these tales is retold here by historian Larry Underwood.*

Lewis "Juaquin" Adams looked down at the poker hand he'd drawn, then into the face of William Dunbar, the man running the game. Across the room was Jeff Dunbar, the dealer's brother.

It was a Tuesday night, April 12, 1892, and Carter & Brenham's Saloon in Casper glowed from the gaslights on the wall. Balls clicked quietly on the green billiard table.

Adams was growing more furious over the way the game was going. He looked at his losing cards again. Dunbar was raking Adams' money out of the center of the table. Suddenly, Adams ripped the cards in half.

Now Dunbar was upset. He said so. The two men were screaming oaths at each other and were headed for a fight when Jeff Dunbar jumped between his brother and Adams. The two men turned from each other, and William Dunbar settled back into his seat.

Adams began cursing Dunbar again, "calling him vile names." Jeff Dunbar took his brother's side and hit Adams, knocking him against the door. In a flash, Jeff Dunbar produced a pistol and struck Adams in the head.

"Pecos" Hughes had been watching all of this and he jumped forward and grabbed Dunbar's gun hand. Adams also got a hand on the gun and the three struggled for a moment. Quickly, Adams let go the pistol and filled his hand with a billiard cue.

As Hughes and Dunbar grappled over the pistol, Jeff commanded, "Turn me loose." Hughes backed away.

Jeff Dunbar had an eyeful of Adams now as he came forward with the cue stick held high. Dunbar waved the pistol and ordered, "Don't you take another step."

Adams answered, "Shoot away, it's fine music to my ears." He stepped closer to Dunbar.

Dunbar put three slugs in the wall and one in the floor, but Adams kept coming. Dunbar finished the job then. He shot and killed Adams.

Calmly, Jeff Dunbar emptied the cylinder and reloaded. He then walked out the back door of the saloon and to the livery stable.

That is where Sheriff Rice and his deputy found the Dunbar brothers a few minutes later. When the sheriff approached, Dunbar called out, "Who are you?"

Rice answered, "It is me and I want you."

"All right, I intended to give myself up."

After the preliminaries, Jeff Dunbar was held without bail and was removed to Douglas, Wyoming, where he was held until the district court met. He was acquitted. The court said he'd acted in self-defense.

The Dunbars moved from Casper. Three years later, they had an altercation with a man named Jim Davis. Jeff shot Davis in his gun hand, severing Davis' thumb. Davis picked up the pistol with his good hand and killed Jeff.

William Dunbar soon left for Montana. He was never heard from again.

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The Ange

by Don Blevins • Illu

On March 6, 1836, 187 men died behind the crumbling, pock-marked walls of the Alamo, in what would become the most remembered battle for Texas independence. Stories would be told and retold of the great effort by a handful of men against an army of some fifteen hundred well-trained, well-equipped soldiers. Movies would be made extolling this moment of gallantry in a time of gallant actions.

Three weeks later, in a place known as La Bahía, in the little town of Goliad, ninety-three miles southeast of the site of the Alamo, 342 men were executed by order of the same man who had laid siege to the Alamo, General Antonio Lopez de Santa Anna. No movies have been made of this massacre, few stories are told of its happening, and the men did not die in a gallant effort. The three hundred-plus died due to indecision, inaction, incompetence, and inefficiency. Their leader failed to carry through on orders from a superior officer; the orders originally issued to him were from a conflicting, confusing provisional government of a republic not yet a reality.

Yet, out of the Goliad debacle emerged a story of bravery, defiance, and near sainthood, all from the actions of one young, beautiful Mexican woman. This would be the only recorded incident where a Mexican, crossing the Rio Grande with a Mexican army, would ever show compassion for the avowed enemy of the homeland.

To digress briefly, from the outset of Texas' early agitation for independence, James Walker Fannin, Jr., of Georgia, was one of its biggest boosters. He entered the foray in August 1835, and remained in the struggle until his death seven months later. Fannin showed great courage and leadership, along with James Bowie, in defending San Antonio in late 1835, and shortly thereafter as a recruiter for the newly forming Texian regular army. It was a few months later, at La Bahía (Spanish for "the bay") that Fannin was to become hero or goat, depending on historical viewpoint.

Fannin was ordered to Goliad to command a special mission, the Matamoros Expedition. This incursion into Mexican territory was, as viewed by some of the volunteers of the day, for a dual purpose. First, it would give the volunteers action with which to inflame their ardor. Having come from the Untied States to Texas to fight Mexicans, they were chomping at the bit. However, since General Martín Perfecto de Cós and his troops had been run out of Bexar the preceding December, there were no more Mexicans left in Texas to fight. Secondly, by invading Matamoros, the Texians would be tak-

These Mexican army riflemen were typical of Santa Anna's army,

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# of Goliad

ations by Gary Zaboly

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which fought at both the Alamo and Goliad.

ing the fight south of the Rio Grande, onto enemy territory, and possibly keeping the battle out of Texas. This latter aim was naiveté at its extreme.

Unknown to the Texians, however, Santa Anna had laid plans to stage a two-front initiative into Texas. He would move to San Antonio and lay siege on the Alamo. From another direction, General José Urrea, one of his most able and trusted officers, was ordered to Matamoros and from there to cross into Texas. Urrea's actions were intended to cut off access to the southern supply line at Copano Bay. General Urrea departed Matamoros on February 17, 1836. The Texians were both overly and foolishly confident Mexico would be unable to initiate an assault anytime soon and were lax in security and in no hurry to establish military doctrine. They would pay dearly for this oversight.

Sitting at Goliad was Fannin, unaware of events in the making. Colonel William B. Travis requested Fannin to reinforce the garrison at the Alamo against the onslaught of Santa Anna and his army. Fannin and most of his men started for San Antonio, but were short on wagons and horses for transportation. As they attempted to cross the San Antonio River, two miles from the presidio, three of their wagons broke down and only through extreme good luck and hard labor were four cannons transported across the stream. Their ammunition wagon remained on the Goliad side of the river. It was at this time that Fannin learned of Urrea's approach. He foolishly decided to return to Goliad and prepare the site as a defense against the oncoming Mexican army.

The men busied themselves with reinforcing "Fort Defiance," as Fannin had dubbed the presidio. A short time later they received another directive to send additional troops to Bexar to assist Travis. Two days later, as they again prepared to march, Fannin received new orders from Sam Houston. With the fall of the Alamo on March 6, the commanding general now ordered Fannin to move his army east, to Victoria, and to defend that section. He also instructed the leader to take only the artillery and stores that could be moved expeditiously and without delay. The remainder of his material was to be sunk in the San Antonio River.

With the Mexican army in hot pursuit, residents in the area between Goliad and Victoria began evacuation. Captain Amon King and Colonel William Ward were sent by Fannin to aid the settlers in their "Runaway Scrape." Both men and their volunteers were captured by Urrea. In the meantime, Fannin was hold-

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ing course at the presidio in Goliad, awaiting the return of Ward and King. This delay resulted in the Goliad massacre. It wasn't until March 17 that Fannin learned of the fate of the two men. Still, Fannin hesitated vacating the presidio for Victoria. On March 19, under cover of a dense fog, Fannin finally, and reluctantly, led his men out of the fort. Their movement was slow on the roadless, barren plain, handicapped by the trudging oxen used to pull their wagons. Fannin ignored Houston's order to carry only artillery necessary to defend themselves. He took nine brass cannons and five hundred spare muskets, but overlooked one very important element—rations for the men. Less than twenty miles from Goliad, they were alerted to the closeness of the Mexican army.

Scurrying toward a wooded area, they soon found themselves surrounded by Mexican troops situated on a high elevation, looking down on the Texians in a depression in open land. The rebels gave good count of themselves. They fought off the attacking forces from mid-afternoon of March 19 until past dark. They were without water or provisions and short on ammunition, yet the better equipped, better led Mexican army failed to defeat the meager force. General Urrea waited for the arrival of more artillery and additional troops. On the following morning, the Texians faced an armed force of some one thousand men, a multitudinous host compared to their meager two hundred capable of fighting. The Texians' gunner had been killed, their engineer seriously wounded, and Fannin wounded.

The Mexicans rained shot from their lofty position down onto the defending renegades. It didn't take long for Fannin and his men to realize that resistance was useless. Still, there was disagreement among the Anglo officers: surrender or fight to the end. Many of them were concerned about the reputation of the Mexican military for its barbaric treatment of captured enemy. It was only after firm agreement to an honorable surrender had been reached that the officers consented to capitulation.

Any terms of surrender agreed upon between Fannin and Urrea, an honorable man, were moot. A decree had been issued in Mexico City that foreigners (Texas was still considered part of the Mexican empire at the time) found armed were to be regarded as pirates and executed. Santa Anna had taken pains to emphasize this provision to General Urrea, himself more soldier than terrorist, and reluctant to participate in murder and execution. Urrea and some of his officers agreed that Fannin and his troops had surrendered in good faith, and were certain that the Mexican government would deal with them in a humane, compassionate way. There is belief, also, that Urrea promised the resistors he would use his influence with the Mexican government to have any call for execution set aside.

Fannin and his men were marched back to Goliad as prisoners. Santa Anna quickly and angrily replied to Urrea, ordering all prisoners be executed immediately. The first letter from the Mexican dictator, dated March 23, was immediately followed by another the following day, stipulating that the "commander of the presidio at Goliad" immediately take action to carry through on the executions. This letter was received by Colonel José Nicolás de la Portilla, acting commander of the post at Goliad. General Urrea had moved on to Victoria, from where he had sent a letter to Portilla to treat the prisoners with compassion and respect. Portilia, no more a butcher than Urrea, was, nevertheless, a soldier and decided he had to follow the dictates of *el presidente*, Santa Ana.

On the morning of March 27, Portilla ordered the prisoners dispersed from the presidio in three different directions. The captives were led to believe they were being marched from their place of confinement to a central point distant from the presidio. There they would be set free to return to the United States. Under this misapprehension, the prisoners marched out of the fortress in good spirit. This ebullience would soon disappear.

One group of men was marched northward, toward Bexar; one eastward, along the Victoria road; and the third headed south, on the San Patricio road. About three-quarters of a mile from the presidio, the prisoners were stopped by their guards. When commands were quickly given in Spanish, many of the captives realized something nasty was afoot. The guards encircled the prisoners, raised their rifles and fired. Most all of the rebels were killed at the first volley. Those that weren't were pursued and either shot or bayoneted. Miraculously, a number of the prisoners managed to escape. Some were able to flee into the woods along the San Antonio River; others feigned death and escaped when the guards returned to the fortress. Fannin, who had been kept inside the fort along with some forty other wounded, was put to death within the walls of the compound. The Anglo leader had reconciled himself to death, but requested he not be shot in the head and that he be buried. He was shot in the head and thrown on a pile with other slain prisoners and burned.

The best estimate of the victims of the Goliad massacre is that twenty-eight managed to escape the

Fannin and his men were marched back to Goliad as prisoners. Santa Anna quickly and angrily replied to Urrea, ordering all prisoners be executed immediately.

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Western Publications

The Alamo

execution squads and twenty were spared because they were physicians, nurses, interpreters, or mechanics being used to serve the Mexican army. Of those marched from the presidio, 342 met their maker. Attempts were made to burn some of the bodies, for sanitary reasons, but green mesquite wood made it almost impossible. What would burn was burned. Those most distant from the presidio were left to buzzards and wolves. It wasn't until June 3 that a party was sent to the area by General Thomas Rusk to secure the remains and give them some sort of decent burial. Today, a monument stands where the remains of Fannin and his men are buried, in the largest mass grave in the United States.

This, then, in a nutshell is the saga of the Goliad massacre, the failure of governmental and command action bringing it on, and another rallying cry to be heard on that fateful day on the plain of San Jacinto. There is more to this story—about Fannin's actions—but that is for another dissertation.

As bad as the events at Goliad were, the number of deaths there and in other places could have been even higher had it not been for the intervention and courage of a young Mexican woman by the name of Francisca Alavez, known in the annals of Texas history as the "Angel of Goliad."

Nothing is known of the background of Francisca (Panchita) Alavez. She enters the Texas independence saga when General Urrea crosses the Rio Grande. The general had on his staff a Captain Telesforo Alavez. There is contradiction as to whether Francisca was a camp follower, Telesforo's lover, or really his wife. While she did carry the captain's name, there is little proof that they were ever legally married. For this epistle, she will be considered Mrs. Alavez. Anyway, this is a case of a person's deeds outshining any flaws of the past.

The survivors of the Goliad massacre are quick to credit Francisca with saving a number of revolutionaries destined for the execution squad. Described as being no more than twenty years old, she had dark hair and was without dissent classified as a beautiful woman, of courage and compassion. Those that she couldn't save herself, she aided by interceding with Mexican officers in position to render such salvation.

Francisca's first intercession in the Texian cause came as the Mexican army led by General Urrea approached the little settlement of Copano, deserted now for more than a century, but at the time located in what is today southern Refugio County. An American ship,

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William and Frances, carrying sixty-eight Nashville volunteers led by Major William Parsons Miller, docked at Copano Bay. The men, unaware that Copano was in Mexican hands, and having been confined to the ship for its twenty-day cruise from New Orleans, jumped into the water and swam ashore, only to be greeted by armed and angry Mexican soldiers. Although some of the men posed as American tourists, the Mexicans weren't fooled and made the new arrivals prisoners. The men were tied up, more stringent than necessary, placed in the open with a hot sun beating down, and deprived of food and water.

This was Francisca's first encounter with American "gringos," and she was less offended by their being enemies of her native land than she was by the harsh treatment they were undergoing. She realized immediately the pain the men were suffering, both from their tight bonds and the agony of thirst. She raged at the Mexican soldiers guarding the prisoners to untie their limbs and give them food and water. Naturally, soldiers were hesitant at first to give comfort to the enemy, especially since they were prisoners of war. Francisca's tantrums and demands, coupled with the fact that she was an officer's wife, soon prevailed. The Americans were most grateful to the brave woman for her intercession and were quick to express their appreciation. The gratitude of the men impressed her and from that day forward, she would be a thorn in the side of her dedicated, aristocratic husband.

Francisca accompanied Telesforo to Goliad as he escorted captured American rebels. Along the way, she became friendly with a young man who spoke French, a language with which she was familiar, and they carried on conversation as

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An *Alamo De Parras* trooper, typical of the Mexican troopers stationed at San Antonio and Goliad before the Texas Revolution.

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they traveled. Upon her arrival at Goliad, she came face to face with the presidio's "Black Hole of Calcutta." Over four hundred prisoners were crammed into a room so small that there was no space in which to lie down. They were packed so tightly that bodies were held in place by other bodies.

A visitor to the fortress today can see the room as it was then. It is difficult to imagine four hundred men cooped up in such a small area. That was the situation into which Francisca entered.

When Francisca saw the wretched conditions under which the prisoners were kept, she went immediately to Colonel Portilla and talked him into letting the captives move into the courtyard for room and fresh air. She also persuaded him to provide food and to let the American doctors treat the men. Francisca was not an illiterate camp follower. She knew exactly what the disposition of the prisoners would be, especially considering Santa Anna's hatred for gringos.

Portilla's fondness for the bravery of this young woman showed when he allowed her to talk him out of executing the men captured at Copano Bay. Her justification was that they had never fired a shot at any Mexican national, and had taken no part in the Texian rebellion. Portilla relented and shipped those men to a prison in Matamoros.

The night before Portilla was to execute the remaining prisoners, Francisca, under cover of darkness, was able to get a dozen or so of the captives out of their cramped room and smuggle them onto the mission parapet, where she kept them hidden until after the massacre. An unofficial source claims that the enterprising woman was able to pull off such a feat by securing a soldier's overcoat (supposedly through the efforts of the sweetheart of the soldier), and wearing it when she entered the compound. The following morning she, along with several other Mexican women, all dressed in black, stood outside the presidio and watched as the men unknowingly marched to their deaths.

Francisca wanted to do something but felt she was helpless. Suddenly, noticing a fifteen-year-old boy in the line of march, she pulled him from the ranks, telling the officer in charge that she needed him in the hospital. The officer voiced no objection, but the lad made an effort to rejoin his comrades. Like them, he mistakenly believed they were being allowed to return home. For Benjamin Franklin Hughes of Kentucky, the unit's drummer boy, Francisca proved to be an angel. That night, he was one of the few live Americans remaining in Goliad. Hughes survived the ordeal, thanks to Francisca, and settled in Dallas, where he lived the rest of his life. Some forty years after the Goliad affair, he wrote an article affirming the massacre and attesting to Francisca's role in saving his life.

The American doctors were not executed because the Mexicans needed them to treat their wounded. This exclusion did not extend to relatives of the physicians. When Francisca learned that the son of John Shackelford, a doctor from Alabama, had been executed, she cried. She asked the doctor why she hadn't been told he had a son there; she could have saved him. Shackelford later escaped from the Mexicans and eventually returned to Alabama, where he practiced medicine. His account is probably the most complete and most reliable of the Goliad massacre.

As has been stated earlier, several of the prisoners destined for execution managed to escape. William Hunter, a volunteer from New Madrid, Missouri, was apparently left for dead, having been shot and bayoneted during the slaughter. He later stated that after a time, a beautiful lady named Alavez dragged his body into the willow pods on the bank of the San Antonio River and dressed his wound.

At one point, Mexican soldiers came upon seven of the escapees. They killed three and captured four, who were later sent to Victoria. By this time, Captain Alavez had been reassigned to Victoria as part of General Urrea's entourage. Francisca was in Victoria when the four prisoners arrived. Isaac Hamilton, a member of Captain Shackelford's Red Rover Company, described what transpired when the four prisoners were lined up in the market square in front of a firing squad.

Brazenly, if not wisely, Francisca ran to where the Americans were posed and placed her body in front of them. Her bravery caught the emotions of another Mexican woman among the onlookers and she joined Francisca. When the two women refused to move, the execution was canceled.

ON APRIL 23, 1836, in what is now a momentous date in Texas history, General Sam Houston led his ragtag rebels across the San Jacinto plain and routed General Santa Anna and his forces. Knowing that once the victorious Texian army was regrouped it would head south to liberate that part of the new republic, General Urrea moved his army across the Rio Grande, into Matamoros. His pay officer, Captain Alavez, was part of the retreating army, accompanied by his wife, Francisca.

By some records, Alavez, shortly after the army's arrival in Matamoros, left for Mexico City, where he abandoned Francisca. There are also claims that the captain was somewhat of a scoundrel, that he actually had another wife, one Maria Agustina de Pozo Alavez of Toluca; Telesforo had abandoned her and their two children in 1834. She wrote the Mexican Ministry of War in 1837, asking assistance in getting support from Alavez. It seems that Telesforo Alavez remained in the Mexican army, retiring after about thirty-eight years service. Nothing more of his private life is known.

All traces of Francisca Alavez seemingly ended in Mexico City in 1836. There is evidence, however, that she returned to Matamoros, penniless as well as homeless, but was accepted by many for her kindness during the Texian rebellion. Being accepted by her fellow coun-

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trymen after aiding and abetting the dreaded gringos is difficult to comprehend, and there is counterclaim to any happy reunion between the natives and Francisca. Her generosity apparently didn't stop. She continued to care for and take an interest in the many Americans held prisoner in Matamoros until they were finally freed many months later.

As if to compound the mystery of this amazing woman, there emerged many years ago another story out of South Texas. Elena Zamora O'Shea, a teacher at Santa Gertrudis Ranch (part of the vast King Ranch empire) in 1902-03, wrote in 1936 of an incident that bore on the legend of the Angel of Goliad. According to O'Shea, every Friday, after class, two old Mexican men, one named Alfonso, a servant to Mrs. King, and another by the name of Don Matias, would come to the schoolhouse and listen as she read to them from Spanish newspapers or lessons from books used by the school children. When reading from a historical account of the massacre of Goliad, Matias became excited and overly interested in the episode. It was at this time that he told O'Shea of his family.

Matias said that his grandfather was Telesforo Alavez. Telesforo was from the old Mexican school where marriages were arranged by families. There was no love, at least on Telesforo's part, for the bride chosen for him by his parents, and the two separated after some years of marriage. The church, all-powerful in matters of its citizenry, would grant an annulment but forbade remarriage; in other words, no divorce. Telesforo had apparently met Francisca during this time and fallen in love with her. In an early display of independence, the couple decided they would take control of their own lives, disregarding the critique of both church and family. He was an officer in the army and when he was sent to the frontier (the Rio Grande and northern sections of Mexico), Francisca accompanied him. After the Texian insurrection was settled, according to Matias, Francisca and Telesforo took up residence in Matamoros. Only the prestige of Telesforo made their life civil, since many Mexicans deeply resented Francisca's acts of humanity toward the gringos during the recent uprising, as well as her continued care and concern for the American prisoners in the city.

When Telesforo died, Francisca was treated like the plague by fellow Mexican citizens. Two children had been born of the Alavez union, a boy named Matias and a daughter, Dolores. Matias, now a grown man, feeling that his mother should be removed from the air of isolation, crossed the Rio Grande and took a job first at the Yturria Ranch, then the Cortina Ranch. The second generation Matias, the grandson of Francisca, worked truck farms in and around Fort Brown (now Brownsville), and fathered eight children, one of whom was named Telesforo. Captain Richard King, founder of the ranch bearing his name, knew both Telesforo and Francisca and the part she played in saving the lives of many Texians during the uprising. In 1884, King offered Matias a job and the family moved to the ranch. From that day forward, members of the Alavez family have been a part of the King Ranch, or its wide range of holdings in the region, such as the ranch's main city, Kingsville.

O'Shea goes on to say that Matias brought his aged mother, Francisca, to the ranch to live with his family. O'Shea recalled the Angel of Goliad as a very old woman, unable to maneuver on her own, and nearing ninety years of age. She died on the ranch and is buried there in an unmarked grave, her past respected by Captain King and his family.

Descendants of Francisca are still attached to the King Ranch and have become doctors, businessmen, government leaders, and military officers. The Alavez name became a part of the Cavazos clan, which includes Lauro Cavazos, former foreman of the Santa Gertrudis Ranch, one-time president of Texas Tech University, and later secretary of education under President George Bush. Another Cavazos connection to the Alavez family is a United States Army four-star general, Richard O. Cavazos.

Whether she was a camp follower, Alavez's lover, legitimate wife, or something in between, the compassion and humanity shown by Francisca toward an enemy of her country transcends any and all negatives that might be cast in her direction. Her actions toward the Texian rebels threatened her husband's career and position. Even greater was the danger she faced by both publicly and secretly aiding and abetting the enemy.

No greater tribute, or one containing more honesty, can be made than that written by a man whom the courageous woman from south of the Rio Grande helped save: "The señora was hardly twenty, a black eyed, high bred beauty. God bless her. She saved my life and the lives of my companions."

Due to the compassion and courage of Francisca, there are several survivors to tell her story.

Today, in the graying, haunted halls of La Bahía, stands a bust of Francisca Alavez. Even in the coldness of the statue, the woman's determination, stamina, courage, and compassion shine through. The bust is displayed proudly, as well it should be.

The Angel of Goliad is the only person on the Mexican side of the Texas struggle for independence to be honored by Texas.

"The señora was hardly twenty, a black eyed, high bred beauty. God bless her. She saved my life and the lives of my companions."

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Outlaws & Lawmen

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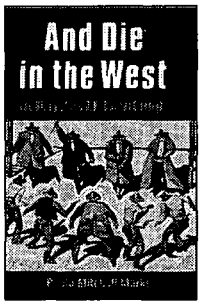

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THE FIRST WIFE

By Catherine Lazers Bauer

Denver Public Library

Augusta Tabor, from an original woodcut.

The well publicized Baby Doe/Horace Tabor story that inspired a novel, a movie, and an opera is tawdry tinsel compared to the real Tabor romance, an adventure that entails the early struggles of rugged Rocky Mountain pioneers of the 1850s. Augusta Pierce Tabor is the heroine of that story.

Augusta Louise Pierce was born in Augusta, Maine, on March 29, 1833, the third of ten children born to William and Lucy Price. A chronically ill child, she nevertheless matured into an enthusiastic, self-assured, ambitious young woman—in an era when women were homebound and had few rights.

In 1853, Augusta's father, a contractor, hired Horace Austin Warner Tabor, twenty-three, as a stonemason. On January 31, 1857, this pair of opposites married. She was thrifty and industrious by nature, he was flamboyant and adventurous.

They headed west with two family friends, Samuel Kellogg and Nathaniel Maxcy, bound for the acreage Tabor was homesteading in Zeandale, Kansas. Augusta wrote in her diary:

> we arrived at our destination on the 19th day of April
>
> ...I shall never forget the morning of my arrival. To add to the desolation of the place the wind was blowing furiously. Sitting upon an open prairie, 1/2 mile from any cabin, was my future home—a log cabin 12x16 feet, not an outhouse, or a stone, or a stick in sight...the only furniture in the room was a No. 7 cook stove...I sat upon an old trunk and tears began to flow copiously.

The young bride confessed she'd not been deceived but she never imagined how lonely the place would be. It was even lonelier when the drought of 1857 forced Horace to work as a stonemason in Fort Riley during the week. Augusta, now pregnant, wrote that she lived on the desolate prairie in constant fear of Indians and snakes.

"In October, baby came to five with us," she notes briefly in her journal. He was named Maxcy after their boarder and longtime friend of the Pierce family in Maine.

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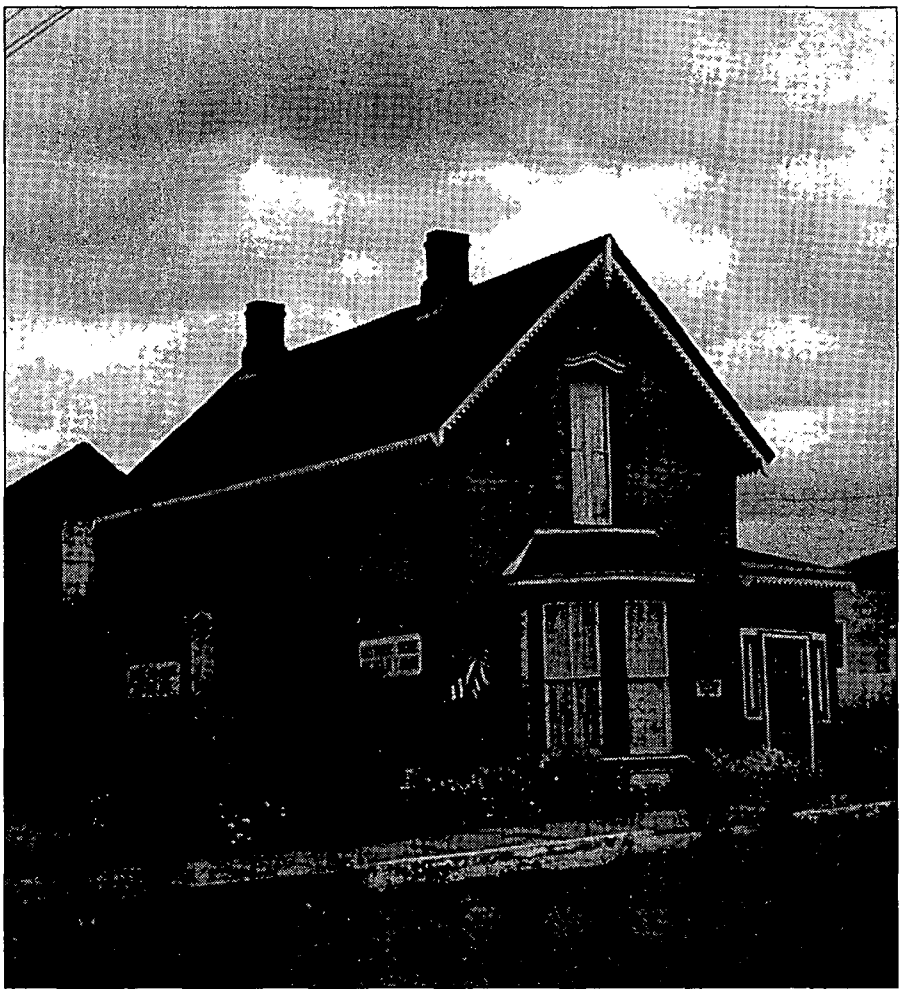
The year 1858 saw an abundant crop, but no market. Reports of gold in the Pikes Peak area beckoned. On May 5, 1859, the three Tabors, Kellogg and Maxcy, loaded their "scanty means," yoked the oxen, tied cattle to the back of the wagon, and left Kansas.

"What I endured on the plains, only those that crossed in 1859 know," Augusta wrote. "There was no station until we got within 89 miles of Denver—no road part of the way." In late June, Augusta was the eleventh woman to arrive in Denver, a crude outpost with a dozen businesses.

A month later, the party moved toward Gregory Diggings (now Central City). Then the men went prospecting in the mountains,

Augusta was left in a tent to watch the cattle and tend the baby. "How sadly I felt, none but my God knew," she wrote.

In mid-August the party reached Payne's Bar (now Idaho Springs). Augusta, the first woman in the camp, was delighted when miners cut trees and laid a log base for their tent. It was becoming Augusta's custom to provide supplementary income by boarding miners and selling homemade bakery.



Author's Collection

The Tabor home in Leadville, Colorado (above). Augusta and Horace lived here when he was a storekeeper. The Tabors moved into a mansion in Denver (below) after Horace struck it rich.

Colorado Historical Society

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Colorado Historical Society

Horace Tabor and his second wife, "Baby Doe."

A move to Denver was followed by a trek in February to South Park. A sickly, but entranced Augusta described the sunset, the crimson clouds, and the herds of antelope, concluding in wonder, "Who made this, O God?"

When they camped at Trout Creek, the men went exploring and found their way back at midnight to a campfire Augusta had kept alive. A donkey crept into her tent and laid down. "I was ever glad of his company," she admits. "I laid my head upon him and cried with loneliness."

For four weeks they camped on Cache Creek, separating scant metals from black sand with a magnet. When a stranger came by with gold nuggets from California Gulch, off they went.

Upon arrival on May 8, 1860, they killed their oxen, sharing the beef with miners in the camp. "Before night," Augusta says, "they had me a log cabin built—12x18 feet—no door nor window, no floor save the earth. I entered the place feeling queenly."

Ten thousand people arrived in the gulch in three months and a busy Augusta fed boarders, did laundry, and served as mail clerk. "I was very happy that summer," she remembers.

But Horace, ever in search of a bonanza, moved on again in August 1861, this time following the stampede over the pass to Buckskin Joe. They stayed put for seven years, operating a store and post office.

Samuel Leach, postmaster of Sterling, wrote his brother about his new friends:

> There is a postmistress at Buckskin....She keeps a boarding house and runs a store. Her husband works in the mines. They are a young couple from down in Maine .... They are considered well to do here and they are thrifty like the down eastern Yankees....I do like these people very well. Their name is Tabor. Her name is Augusta and his is Horace.

Leach recounted an argument between the Tabors. When Horace dreamed aloud about loafing for three months in fine New York hotels, Augusta bristled and chastised her husband for taking too much time off for fishing and playing cards. She said they wouldn't have a dollar in the world if it weren't for her looking out for him. "But I like them both very much," concluded Leach. "I kept my mouth shut."

After the gold gave out at Buckskin Joe, it was over Mosquito Pass in 1868. The Tabors landed in Oro City, where operating three stores in the general vicinity over a ten-year period gave them a net worth of $30,000.

By his own admission, in 1878, Horace, forty-seven, and wife Augusta, forty-four, were enjoying their most contented period, participating in social and civic activities in their community. Who would guess that in April, two down-and-out prospectors would change that picture? George Hook and August Rische secured a grubstake from Horace Tabor, an easy touch for he was ever hopeful of the big strike, much to Augusta's dismay.

This time it paid off. Horace received a third of the $10,000-a-day diggings in the Little Pittsburgh silver mine. He sold his shares for one

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million dollars. The Chrysolite and Matchless silver mines further enriched the Tabors. The "59er" pioneers were wealthy pillars of society in Leadville, a city which had grown from 259 to 25,999 in two years. H.A.W. Tabor, "Silver King of Colorado," built the sumptuous Tabor Opera House on Harrison Avenue and contributed much time and money to state politics.

Rich at last, Horace reveled in a lavish lifestyle—drinking, gambling, and womanizing. Augusta remained her ever frugal self and she frowned on her husband's prodigal behavior.

Even a Denver mansion purchased after Tabor was elected lieutenant governor in 1878 did not impress Augusta.

"Tabor is just the same now while enjoying great wealth as when it was but in anticipation," stated an article in the *Silver Cliff Miner*. Augusta's "beautiful Denver home is always open to miners and 'plain people' she has known."

As the rift widened between the Tabors, Elizabeth McCourt Doe, a blonde beauty from Oshkosh, Wisconsin, had little difficulty in capturing the eye and heart of Horace Tabor.

Colorado Historical Society

Augusta Tabor in later life.

On January 2, 1883, Augusta, in exchange for property worth $300,000, granted Horace a divorce. "Not willingly," she tearfully informed the judge. "Oh, God, not willingly."

Signing the final papers, Augusta sobbed and turned to her attorney, Amos Steck, "What is my name now?"

"Your name is Tabor, ma'am," he said. "Keep the name. It's yours by right."

Augusta chose not to sue for divorce on grounds of adultery. "She knows all about his practices with lewd women," her lawyer said. "If the truth were known, it would be enough, to ruin Tabor forever...I never saw such a woman. She is crazy about Tabor. She loves him and that settles it."

On March 1, 1883, Horace Tabor, fifty-two, married Baby Doe, twenty-eight, in the Willard Hotel in Washington, DC. Subsequently, it was reported a bogus marriage since Baby Doe's divorce had not been revealed to the officiating Catholic priest. The Reverend P.L. Chappelle returned the $200 gratuity and declared the marriage void.

"With the divorce, the real Augusta Tabor died," states her biographer, Betty Moynihan. Augusta, with the staunch support of friends and family, worked hard helping the unfortunate and rescuing the Unitarian Church in Denver from financial ruin.

Augusta died in the Balmoral Hotel in Pasadena, California, January 30, 1895 on the eve of her thirty-eighth wedding anniversary. On February 5, 1895, her funeral was held in the Unitarian Church in Denver. One of the richest, but loneliest women in Denver left her $1.5 million estate to her son and siblings. Horace died penniless on April 19, 1899.

Evelyn E.L. Furnam, biographer, quotes an old California Gulch miner. Rough mining camps, he said, revealed basic character. "There was never a harder working woman nor a bigger-hearted one. If she had one meal between her and starvation, she would share it with anyone in want....Horace Tabor had a mighty good wife, one that stuck by him through thick and thin in the years he was struggling, and he ought not to forget it."

Betty Moynihan likens the union to a Greek tragedy. "The Tabors' tragic flaw was that Augusta provided what was necessary, and what Horace needed was not what he wanted."

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RICHARD DOWLING AND THE BATTLE OF SABINE PASS

One of the better known engagements of the Civil War was the Battle of Sabine Pass, Texas. It involved a young Dick Dowling who received great acclaim for his leadership during that battle. Tim Dye, Stafford, Kansas, wishes to know something about Dowling and the battle.

Richard William Dowling (1836-1867) was a successful businessman prior to his becoming a Civil War hero. Born in Tuam, Galway County, Ireland, his family migrated to Texas after 1846 and settled in New Orleans. In the 1850s Dowling, after the deaths of his parents, worked his way west and settled in Houston, Texas.

He became quite successful in the saloon business, owning several establishments and eventually managing a liquor importing firm. When the war broke out Dowling found his niche in the history books.

In the early days of the war Dowling, with a rank of first lieutenant, raided United States army outposts on the Texas-Mexico border. His area of operations eventually became the entire upper Texas Gulf Coast. On January 1, 1863, Dowling participated in the Confederate victory at Galveston in which the port was recaptured, causing considerable damage to the prestige of the Union navy. Dowling and his company were then transferred to Sabine Pass, which controlled access to the Sabine River. On January 21, Dowling, artillery commander aboard the steamer *Josiah A. Bell*, fought the Union forces for two hours before claiming victory. Dowling was credited with the accuracy of his artillery as well as saving his own ship from sinking by preventing the ship's magazine from flooding.

What history has termed the Battle of Sabine Pass did not occur, however, until September 8, 1863, when Union forces attacked with several gunboats. Again, Dowling was credited with victory due to the accuracy of the guns under his command. Two Union gunboats were sunk and two were captured before the others withdrew. Besides the loss in ships, 350 Union sailors were taken prisoner. The Confederate forces defending Sabine Pass did not have a single casualty.

Following this spectacular victory, Dowling was made a recruiting officer until his discharge with the rank of major in 1865. He returned to oversee the businesses he had operated prior to the war and could look

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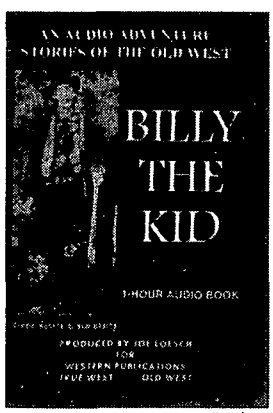

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forward to a successful career. But he soon became ill with yellow fever and died September 23, 1867. He is buried in St. Vincent's Cemetery in Houston, Texas.

The Messenger

The mysteries surrounding the actual events of June 25, 1876 at the Little Bighorn will probably never be completely resolved, but only with continuing questioning will the "final answers" ever be even closely determined. Jerry D. Chastain, Richmond, California, inquires about Sergeant James Butler. "What about Butler's death...I have read that he may have been going for help when he went down."

In contrast to what we know about Custer's final moments, the opposite is true for Sergeant Butler of Company L as historians disagree significantly. He may have been killed during the retreat from Medicine Tail ford, or he may have been cut off from his company and killed alone. It is possible he was sent as a courier to get help from Major Reno and was cut down before reaching him, who was himself fighting desperately with his own troops, or he may have been cut down while trying to escape from the battlefield. Although not all historians agree, there is a consensus that Sergeant Butler had been sent to get help from Reno but was killed on the way.

An important resource remains *The Mystery of E Troop: Custer's Gray Horse Company at the Little Bighorn* by Gregory Michno, published by Mountain Press Publishing Company, Missoula, Montana, in 1994.

Ghost Dancer

It is always good to receive mail from longtime *True West* readers, such as George A. Hall, De Smet, South Dakota. Mr. Hall wrote of how much he enjoys both *True West* and *Old West*, but misses the "Trails Grow Dim" department. To keep that going our readers have to contribute to it. As to his question, Mr. Hall wishes to know more about an Indian named Wovoka, supposedly adopted by the Mormons, who took the "white man's name" of Jack Wilson and later started the Ghost Dance religion that resulted in the killings at Wounded Knee.

Wovoka was a Paiute medicine man, born about 1856 in western Nevada, the son of Tavibo, who was also a medicine man and mystic. After his father's death, he was taken into the David Wilson family and given the name Jack Wilson.

The Ghost Dance movement did not originate with Wovoka-Wilson, as it had appeared in various places for several decades prior to Wovoka. The movement can be said to have really started due to Wovoka's actions. In 1887 he had a vision of having died and coming face to face with God, or the Great Spirit. In the vision, Wovoka was instructed to return to earth and teach a number of principles, including to love one another, to live in peace with the whites, to not lie or steal, and not to wage war. He was also given a dance which he was to teach his people.

Historian James Mooney discovered that shortly before Wovoka's teaching began he had suffered from a fever causing a delirium which resulted in a trance. At the same time there was an eclipse of the sun causing alarm among the Paiutes. Wovoka was sincere in his belief of meeting the Great Spirit and many Indians in the western states accepted his teachings. Naturally all of his teachings were not accepted or carried through as intended. The most famous and tragic result being the massacre at Wounded Knee, South Dakota, in 1891 when the United States army slaughtered many Sioux.

Wovoka was naturally saddened that his teachings had led to such tragedies but he remained firm in

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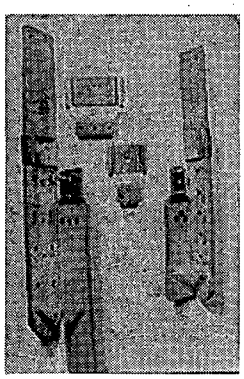

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his belief. He never renounced his vision but continued to teach that the way to peace was only through learning to live with the whites.

On September 20, 1932, Wovoka died on the Walker River Reservation at Schurz, Nevada, and was buried in its cemetery.

Movie Magazines

Kevin J. Starry, who wrote via e-mail, inquires about magazines being published that list and review western movies and videos being produced today. I know of no specific magazine fitting this description but hopefully if such a publication exists our faithful readers will so inform us. Unfortunately, very few western movies are being produced nowadays.

Tales Photos Tell

George M. Atwood is a genuine old timer living in Jerome, Idaho. He has read hundreds of books and magazines about the Old West, while suffering from severe health problems. Occasionally his memory fails him, such as trying to remember the name of a specific book. He writes: "I don't know if I heard of or read about a book...it's been bugging me for the last few days. Is there a book out on the outlaws that were killed showing them after they were killed? The way I recall it it showed the bodies and how they were tore up from the shots that killed them...."

There have been many books which show photographs of dead outlaws, but one which comes to mind is *The Album of Gunfighters,* by J. Marvin Hunter and Noah H. Rose. The book was published in 1951 and featured many photos which made up the famous Rose Collection, now in the University of Oklahoma collections. Photographer Rose had collected pictures of famous western characters, some available only by the death photo, and included many of them in this book. The pictures included famous ones, such as Jesse James, Ben Kilpatrick, and the Daltons, as well as lesser known outlaws. Today the book is quite scarce.

Another book which contains a number of death photos is *The Wild Bunch of Robbers' Roost* by Pearl Baker. This work concentrates on a certain segment of western outlaw history, whereas the Hunter-Rose volume takes in the entire West.

The Best Shot

Glen Kallso, Huntington Beach, California, found an article in the *New York Times* of January 9, 1892, discussing the Stevens County, Kansas, county seat war and one of its participants, Judge Theodocious Botkin. What really caught Mr. Kallso's attention was the statement that Botkin was "acknowledged to be the best and quickest shot in the entire Southwest, and his bravery has never been questioned by his most bitter enemy." The article also included this less than complimentary statement: "His habits have not been of a nature to cause him to be mistaken for a prohibition lecturer."

Mr. Kallso hated to admit it but he had never heard of this quick shot artist, and neither had anyone he asked about...and neither had I! However, there was such a man and he did have a role in the Stevens County, Kansas, feud between the factions supporting Samuel N. Wood and his opponents who supported Sam Robinson.

Botkin was a district judge in Kansas, but he was far from fearless. He supposedly fled to Topeka, Kansas, after lawman Ed Short threatened him, believing Botkin was responsible for the death of his friend, Sam Wood. It is not known if Short did threaten the life of Botkin or not. I have found no additional information about Judge Botkin, but do not believe he was anywhere near the expert pistol shot the *New York Times* made him out to be!

If you have a question, send it to Chuck Parsons, Western Publications, P.O. Box 2107, Stillwater, OK 74076. Please keep questions brief. Sign your full name and address, including zip code. Names will be published if question is used. Space limitations may not permit us to use all questions. Due to the volume of mail, we cannot forward correspondence to people whose questions appear in "Answer Man."

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Those Damn Postcards. **By Allen P. Bristow.** The notorious Pond brothers can outrun the law but not the mail.

The School Board Murders. **By Gina M Leiteritz.** A lone assassin waits in the shadows of a Colorado schoolhouse for his enemies.

They Called Him Cockeyed Charlie. **By A.J. Mueller.** A strong-willed teamster fools an entire town and rattles a local election.

Why the Wild West. **By Eric Sorg.** William F. Cody, a former buffalo hunter, takes his show on the road.

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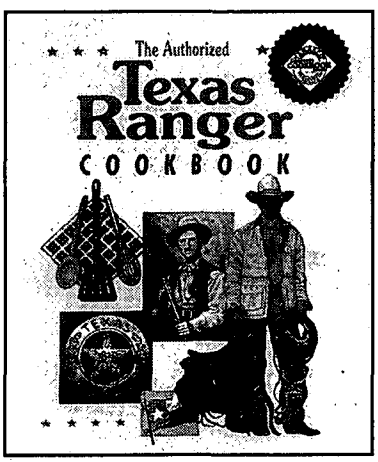

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Barber County afforded settlers of south central Kansas a much sought-after commodity and an inherent amenity that few other counties could: an abundant supply of timber. Like much of Kansas, particularly to the north and west, the landscape in surrounding counties tended to be mostly flat, treeless prairie. Barber County, with winding canyons providing habitation to grove after grove of native cedar, walnut, elm, hackberry, and cottonwood trees, was something of a natural phenomenon on the Kansas high plains.

Much of the timber, however, grew on acreage the federal government held in trust for the Osage Indians, and settlers did not have the legal right to cut or otherwise remove even a single twig. But, by common consent and often out of sheer necessity, early settlers elected to respect certain laws while disregarding others. Restrictions on cutting timber were, for the most part, conveniently overlooked.

Consequently, for several years after the first settlement, a number of Barber County inhabitants made their livings by cutting and gathering timber suitable for fence posts or building materials from government lands and hauling the wood to the nearby cowtowns of Wichita and Hutchinson, where they could earn a handsome price. And while Barber County residents considered it

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WOOD FOOT RACE

By Tim Beims

entirely legitimate for them to exploit the timber resources on the government land, they tended to draw the line on outsiders doing the same.

Unfortunately, it was not altogether uncommon for some excessively enterprising Barber County residents to secure appointments as deputy United States marshals or county officials and arrest wood haulers from neighboring Harper, Pratt, or Kingman counties, making them give up their loads (and in some cases, what money they might happen to have) under threat that if they refused, they would be dragged before a federal court and jailed or fined. While not many engaged in this sort of blackmailing scheme, a few unprincipled men most certainly did rely on this tactic to generate revenues.

One day in 1871, a party of men from Harper, the county seat of Harper County, traveled to Barber County and loaded their wagons with firewood cut from government land. Among them was a fourteen-year-old boy named M.K. Kittleman. The wood haulers made the mistake of driving through the Barber County seat, Medicine Lodge, with their loads. The sheriff and his deputy, who apparently were not very busy on that particular day, arrested the men, compelling them to unload the wood, and with some admonitions about the seriousness of cutting and removing timber from public lands, permitted them to proceed homeward with empty wagons.

The sheriff and deputy regarded the incident as a good joke on the Harper County men, and also as an easy way to secure firewood. They immediately appropriated the loads which had been gathered with much labor and perspiration by the men from Harper.

As residents of Medicine Lodge were to later learn, the young Kittleman savored the sour memory of that "transaction" and grew determined to somehow get even with the Medicine Lodge perpetrators. As he grew, Kittleman developed a passion for sports, especially foot racing, which was a popular pastime on the Kansas prairie. When Kittleman was seventeen, he entered a competition for a cash prize offered by the Sumner County Fair Association to the athlete who could run one hundred yards in the quickest time. The purse was large enough to attract a professional runner, who won the prize, but Kittleman made such an impressive showing for an untrained racer that he captured the attention of a professional runner and trainer, who proposed to become the boy's manager and undertake his training.

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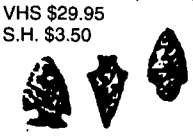
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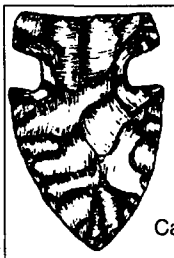
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distance runners in the country. As his fame spread, however, there still lingered in his mind the humiliation of having been wronged on that fateful wood deal years before. As it would prove to turn out, while running races from the Atlantic to the Pacific, he was scheming on a plan to get even with the people of Medicine Lodge.

In the railroad-less frontier town, there was not much to do and time often hung heavy on the hands of the resident sports. They necessarily had to depend on their own resources for amusement. Pony races were a favorite form of diversion, as were local foot races. Although it was hardly a spectacle befitting of the Olympics, young men and women would go out on the prairie, take off their boots and socks, and run barefoot. Small wagers of one to five dollars were usually made to increase the interest.

One day an athletic-looking young man arrived in Medicine Lodge on the overland stage and announced that he was looking for a location for a sheep ranch. A foot race was on, and to pass the time, the prospective sheep rancher strolled out with the crowd. He seemed very interested, and remarked to bystanders that he had always taken great interest in athletics–especially foot racing. In fact, he revealed to the crowd that he had once been a professional foot racer, and still kept his racing shoes and tights as mementos.

Upon hearing this, the local runners began pleading with him to give an exhibition of his ability. Most of them, of course, had never seen a professional runner in action. The young man, who said his name was Calder, at first was reluctant, insisting that he had given up racing when he decided to settle down on a ranch. Finally, seemingly only to be a good sport, he gave in. Calder's running prowess was a revelation to the Medicine Lodge locals. He could run so much faster than the swiftest of them that they almost seemed to be standing still. Then, too, when

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dressed in his racing outfit, he seemed to them like the perfect physical specimen of a runner.

One of Calder's favorite feats was to beat a horse running one hundred yards. He would run fifty yards, turn at a post set in the ground, and then sprint back to the starting point. He had the advantage on the horse in the quicker start and the ability to turn at the post before the horse could either stop or turn.

The admiration and confidence in Calder grew among the Medicine Lodge residents. They were satisfied that he was a champion racer, and he rarely missed the opportunity to assure them that he was probably the swiftest man on foot in the world. True, he did not seem to be making much of an effort to locate a sheep ranch, but that didn't seem to particularly alarm anyone at the time.

As word of Kittleman's running accomplishments continued to proliferate, a Medicine Lodge man asked Calder if he had ever had occasion to come up against a runner by that name. Calder replied that he had never even heard of Kittleman. The man went on to tell Calder that Kittleman claimed to be a great runner, and that folks in adjacent Harper County insisted that he was the fastest man to ever set foot on Kansas soil. Calder, it was reported, responded by smiling and telling the man that he had seen many a runner get the foolish idea that they could not be beaten until they ran up against a professional like himself who could *really* run.

To agitate the matter, there existed a long-standing rivalry between Medicine Lodge and Harper County residents dating back to the earliest days of settlement. Perhaps sensing the opportunity to take the railroad town down a few notches, a direct challenge was issued to the people of Harper to bring Kittleman to Medicine Lodge to take on their best "local" runner. Kittleman jumped at the chance (a little too quickly it was recalled afterward), and a $100 purse was taken up by the Medicine Lodge residents and placed on Calder, with the invi-

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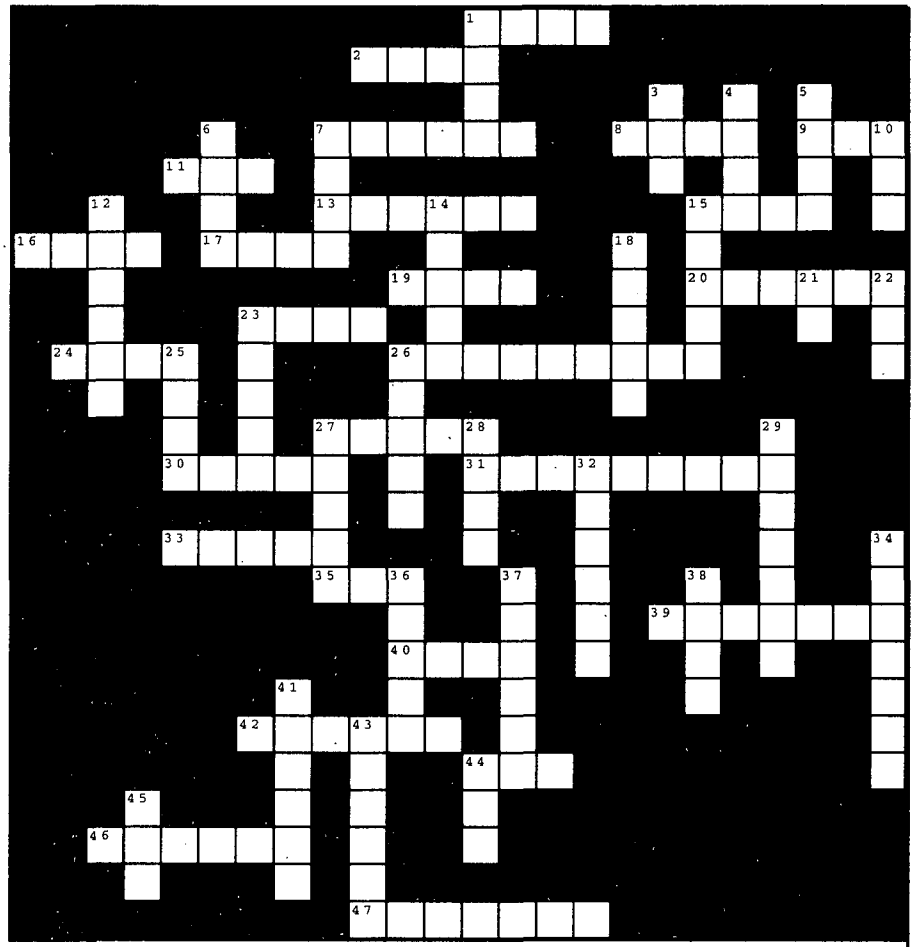

Across

1. Turkey Creek ___ Johnson
2. Bucking the Tiger
7. Cigarette paper and tobacco
8. ___ Pickett (invented Bulldogging)
9. ___ Upsom
11. Consumptive dentist
13. John S. ___
15. "Go ___ young man!"
16. piece of chewing tobacco
17. ___ Johnson (wrote *John Ringo*)
19. Cap and ...
20. Slickered Tom Horn
23. Calaboose
24. Cowboy's extra pockets
26. Music played in *True West* office
27. "woolies" and "shotgun"
30. Every school kid had one
31. Home to Julius Cesar's New York Coffee House
33. Lost his head in Parral, Mexico
35. Color of the dirt in Indian Territory
39. Found behind the saddle
40. "Bloody" ___ Longley
42. Mysterious Dave
44. ___ Hardin
46. Arbuckles was one
47. First Texas lawdogs

Down

1. Texas ___ Slaughter
3. Sundance, Apache, Curry, or Billy
4. Color of Custer's eyes
5. Frontier staple
6. The coward who shot Mr. Howard
7. ___ Bowman
10. Sugarloaf
12. Takes a churnin'
14. *True West* founder Joe ___
15. ___, Fargo Co.
18. ___ Jack Vermillion
21. Gunfight at the ___ Corral
22. "Reach for the ___"
23. Cowboy business meeting
25. Site of 1847 Indian uprising
26. Lincoln sheriff
27. Burnt to keep mosquitos away
28. Raising the ante
29. Murderous Kansas family
32. Pocketknife maker
34. Met their Waterloo in Coffeyville
36. Frank J. ___
37. Skinny cow
38. Wrote *Dark Angel of Texas*
41. The Hanging Judge
43. Ozark valley
44. ___ Hardin
45. Billy's kid brother

Solution can be found in next month's TRUE WEST.

tation to Harper folks to bet all they cared to on the side.

It was agreed that the race would be a 100-yard course, and would start with the shot of a revolver. When Kittleman appeared for the contest in running attire, there was a look of surprise on the faces of many of the Medicine Lodge sports. For the first time, the backers of Calder realized that, in at least as far as physical development was concerned, their supposed champion was no match for the Harper man. But they had seen Calder run, and they maintained the utmost confidence in their man. Calder reassured them that he was the top runner in the country, and would make Kittleman look like a tortoise.

So the Medicine Lodge folks eagerly placed their bets, which Kittleman and his backers quickly covered. At the sound of the pistol shot, Kittleman seemed to spring "effortlessly through the air like an arrow from a bow." Almost from the very first step, the good people of Medicine Lodge knew their money was gone. Indeed, Calder was beaten by a good ten yards at the finish line.

When the stake money was handed over to the victor, Calder burst into tears, saying that he had bet every dollar he had on himself and that he was now dead broke. His plea touched the hearts of the Medicine Lodge cowboys, who immediately took up a collection for his benefit and, although they had gambled away a good deal of money themselves, succeeded in turning over to Calder nearly $30 to pay his way back home.

The next afternoon, word reached Medicine Lodge that Calder was seen that very morning with Kittleman in Harper, and that the two appeared to be having a very pleasant time together as they divided their winnings according to a previous arrangement.

"I think maybe," Kittleman remarked to a newspaperman afterward, "that I am even with those (expletive) Medicine Lodge fellows for that load of wood."

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Bennett Walls Company 5
Blevins Manufacturing 56
Blue Mountain Publishing 57
Bob's Old Badges 60
Book Mart 36-38, 49, 58, 61
Buffalo Rose North 55
Casa de Patron 7
Collector's Armoury 10
Collector's Library 13
Commons Crafts 59
Critics' Choice Video 35
Dixie Gun Works 8
Eagles, Steve 59
Frontier Calendar 60
Harris Farms Publishing 57
Lahontan Images 5
Little Bat's Trading Post 55, 56
Lyseng,Cam 59
Morris Publishing 8
Mountain Press Publishing 9
National Collector's Mint 1
Northern Map Company 55
Outlaws and Lawmen Books 49
Pleasant Valley Saddle Shop 7
R & A Hobbies 56
Santa Fe Trading Post 12
Shkurkin, Vlad 59
Single Action Shooting Society 13
Slocum Books 59
Texas A&M Press 11
True West Binders 64
True West/ Old West Calendar ....Cover 3
True West / Old West & Billy the Kid tape 54
Women in the West Books 58
Westernlore Press ....Cover 2
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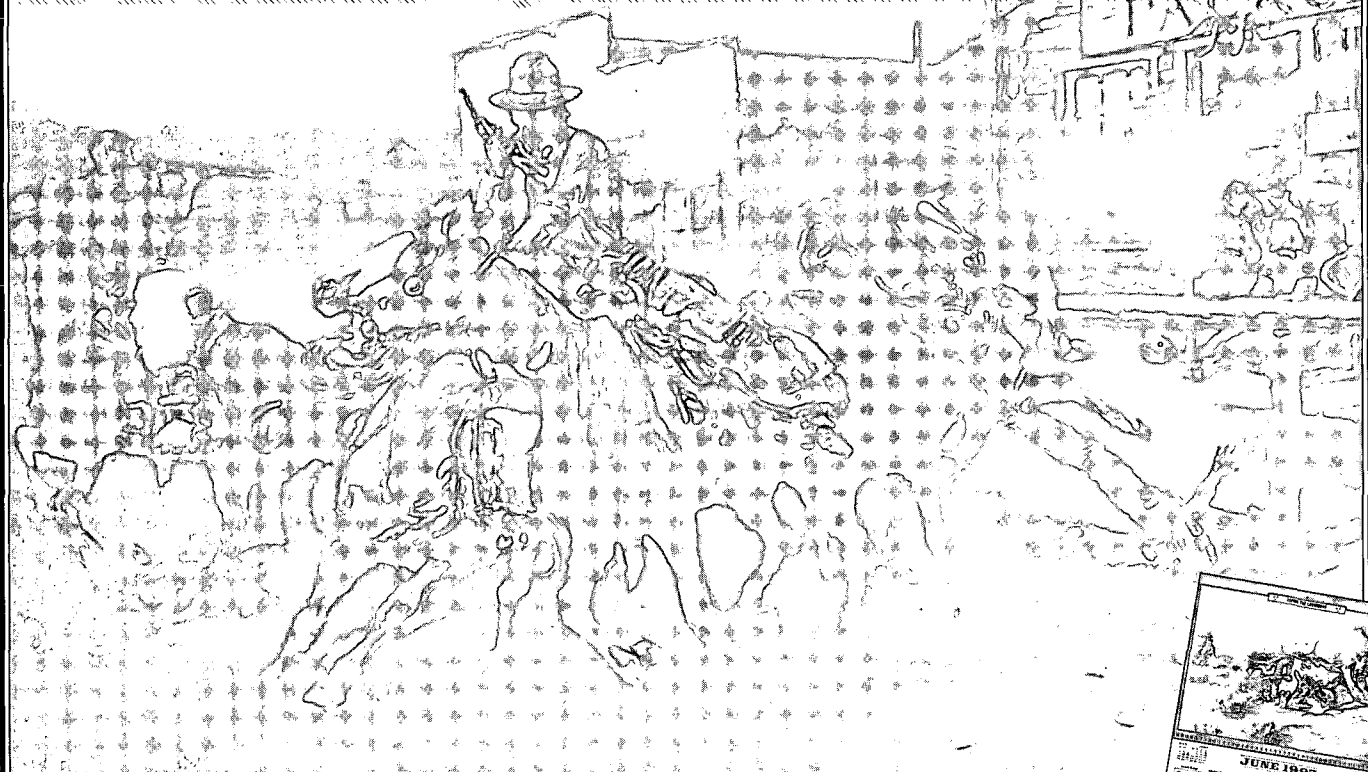

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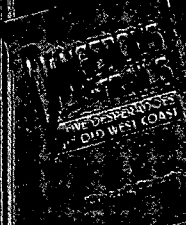

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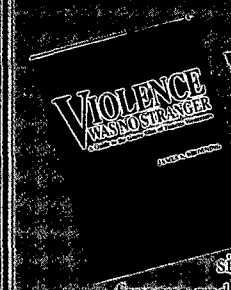

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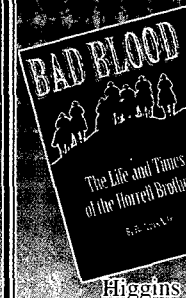

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